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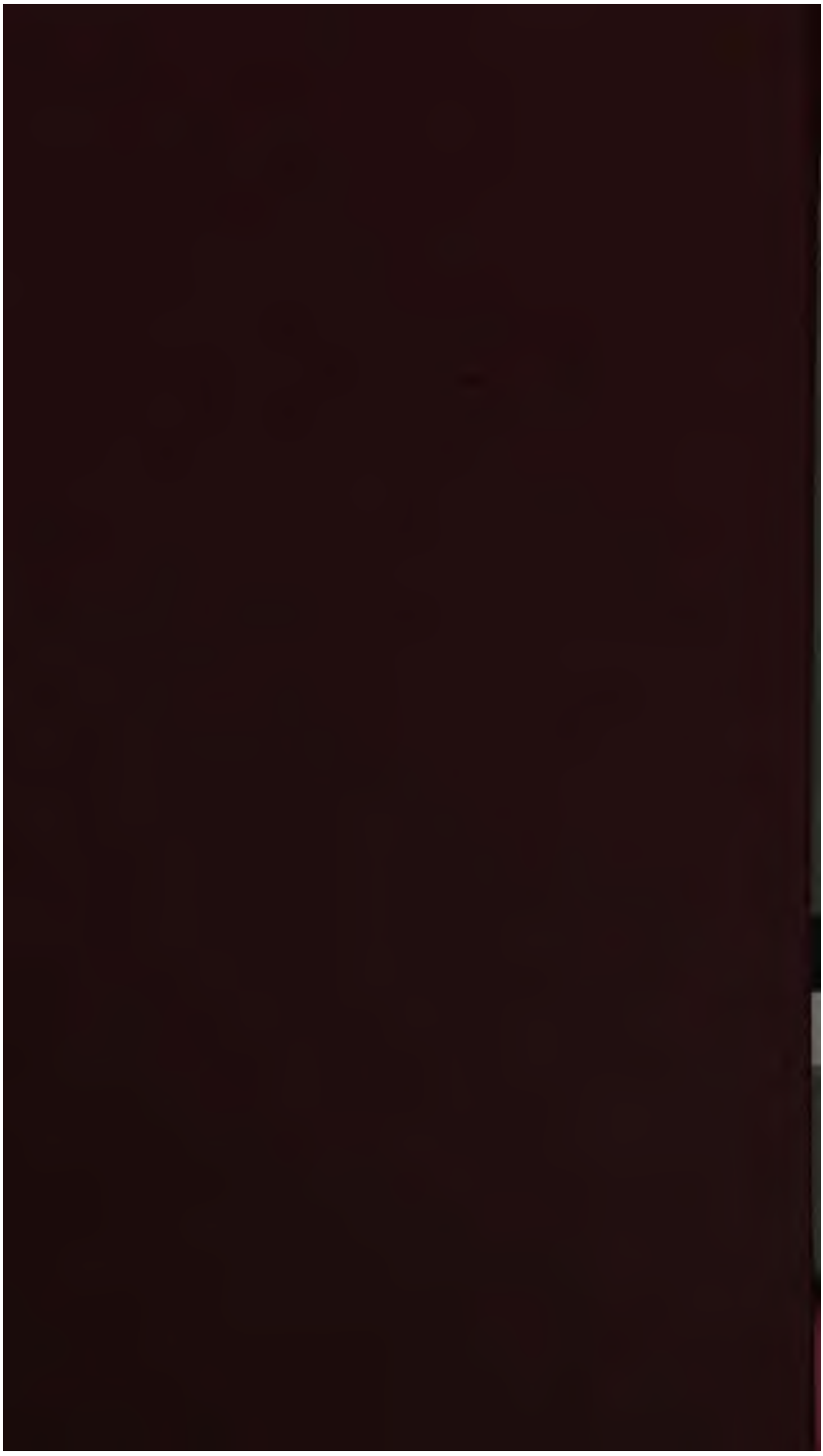

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THE

CHRISTIAN

UNIVERSALIST.

BY EDWARD MITCHELL.

NEW-YORK:
CLAYTON & VAN NORDEN, PRINTERS,
49 WILLIAM-STREET.

1833.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

MY DECEASED, BUT DESERVEDLY BELOVED CHILDREN,

AND

TO THE USE OF

THOSE WHO YET LIVE,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED,

BY THEIR FATHER,

E. M.

August 3d, 1833.

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TO THE SOCIETY

OF

UNITED CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

IN THE

CITY OF NEW-YORK.

Friends:

The circumstances of the moment strongly impress on me the necessity of no longer delaying what has long been considered by me as an imperious duty; that is, that there should be presented to you an outline of the doctrine taught in our church. The constitution of our Society requires of the Presiding Elder, that he shall watch over the spiritual interests of the Society, and report to it on all matters, wherein it is interested. This duty, he has thought, would be most efficiently discharged, by a faithful exhibition from the pulpit, of what he has very long considered the pure truth of Christianity. Experience has, however, taught him, that in many instances his sentiments have been so misrepresented, that it has become a duty he owes to truth—to the cause in which he has been engaged for the greater part of his life, that you should now have from the press something of the nature of a creed, confession, or catechism of the doctrine he has spent so many years in labouring to establish. We know the prejudice existing with

some, against all creeds and confessions; but why should it be so? What is a creed, but the principle which a man believes; and what is a confession of faith, but the acknowledgment of that principle? Every man who believes any thing, that thing is his creed; and every man who makes an acknowledgment of what he believes, that is his confession. If then these things be so, where is there a being possessing intellectual power, and having intercourse with his fellows, who has not a creed, who has not made a confession?

The creeds and confessions among Christians, are the views which the makers of them have of religious doctrine, of faith, and morals. An advantage in these various views being exhibited, is, that every one can the more readily perceive where he can most conscientiously worship.

It has been said, that the Bible is the creed of the protestant. This is true; yet protestants themselves have greatly differed, respecting the doctrines revealed in that sacred book: hence has arisen the necessity, which each party has found itself under, of giving to the world its creed, or confession of faith: this difference of judgment does indeed exhibit a lamentable view of the weakness, or depravity of human intellect—that man cannot understand, though God himself is the teacher; or that his mind is so sensual that he will not listen to the Saviour of the world, who says, "*learn of me.*" (Mat. xi. 29.)

In this state of things, what is our duty? The answer is given; if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. (James i. 5.) Surely the ear of

the Lord is open to the cry of him, who in sincerity of soul cries to God, saying: O, God, teach me to see thee as thou art; and to see myself as I am seen of thee. The answer of prayer may not be immediately given; but, we think, that where this desire of the mind becomes habitual, (and desire is prayer,) the Supreme Being, to whom it is addressed, will, in his own good time, (and that is always the wisest and the best,) give such measure of knowledge of himself, and of man his creature, as will convince the worshipper, that man is a sinner, and that God is his Saviour. But this measure of the knowledge of God, and of himself, does not prevent the continuance of his prayers; for the possession of knowledge is like wealth; he who knows he has but little, desires to have more; and the more he gets the more he knows its value, and desires its increase. The believer's knowledge is a spiritual treasure, even the enjoyment of life eternal; and he is exhorted to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter iii. 18.) He whose heart is touched with the love of God, we think, ought not to be ashamed of acknowledging him as the friend of sinners; for, with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Rom. x. 10.) Here is faith (the thing believed) in the heart, and a confession made in consequence of it! The Psalmist says, I believed, therefore have I spoken; (Ps. cxvi. 10.) and Paul says, we, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak. (2 Cor. iv. 13.) Is it possible, after these scripture evidences, for a man who is a Christian, and professes to make the Scriptures

his rule of faith and practice, to have any reasonable objection to creeds and confessions?

We fear that enmity against these, arises from the want of faith in the things believed and confessed. If indeed a man does not believe, he is at liberty to express his dissent; but to be at enmity with the principle, is so far from rational *free thinking*, that it goes far to deny the right of thinking, or, if we do think, to forbid us the right of expressing our thoughts. We believe, and therefore we speak; and when we thus speak, it is a matter of little importance whether it be orally or by writing, whether it is in the form of creed, catechism, or confession. We have chosen the form of a catechism, but it is a catechism founded on a creed generally received in the Christian community. The form of question and answer is most familiar to young persons; but let us not forget that the lessons taught us in early life, are intended for our use in every after period.

The necessity for, and advantages of a catechism, were long since advocated from your pulpit; it was approved of and greatly wished for by some; and it is now nearly three years, since a dying daughter urged upon her father, the preparation of one; and gave as a reason, that if it answered no other purpose, it would be useful to his children. This was to him like a voice from the dead; and his feelings on the subject, have ever since been, that should he find the hour of his departure was suddenly come, even the visions of glory would not prevent a degree of regret, that this little work had not been accomplished. Blessed be God, it is done; and, however imperfectly, it may be of use to his children, and perhaps to the children of others.

The rise and progress of the Society of United Christian Friends, is but a sketch. The first book of the church, containing (or it ought to have contained) much matter of interest, is lost; and some of the most interesting transactions took place at a time when the writer of this did not reside in the city. What yet remains will be considered as worth preserving, by those who take an interest in the welfare of the Society.

The Marriage Ceremony has been generally thought very solemn; copies of it have been asked for, and a wish has been expressed, that it should be printed; it is, therefore, furnished. Here it may not be improper to remark, that those present may be benefited—those who have been long husband and wife, by being reminded of duties which they may, in some degree, have forgotten—and the unmarried, by having presented to them what will be their duties, should they enter into the marriage contract. It is to be feared, that many consider the matter as a mere ceremony, and that while that ceremony is performing, they do not pay a sufficient attention to the obligations to which they bind themselves, "in the presence of God, and his chosen witnesses." Let the unmarried think well of these things before they call on a minister to officiate; and if they cannot accede to the principles contained in this form, and will marry, it is better that they apply to a civil magistrate, who is only bound to know marriage as a civil contract.

Again, we would exhort those who profess religion, to marry only in the Lord; that is, to those of like faith. Our greatest enjoyment in life arises from our prospect of bliss to come in a future life; and if on this subject husband and wife cannot agree, their difference must

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prudence, as in the book of Proverbs? If there were no future state, the wisdom of this book alone would be of inestimable value, in showing us how to avoid the ills, and to obtain the enjoyment of the real pleasures of the life that now is. Then study the Bible well; you will find it the candle of the Lord, by which you may read the fair book of nature, and find that the God of nature and the God of grace is one. If you wish for further evidence, take the little tract by Leslie, which he calls his "Short and Easy Method with the Deists," and you will find much plain common-sense evidence, that the facts stated in the Scriptures never could have been received, had not the people to whom they were presented known that they were true. Many other authors might here be named, who have advocated the truth of the Christian religion. But we forbear: if you wish for them, you can easily find them; and though they may, in some points of divnity, not agree, yet you will find strong evidence in all, that the Scriptures are a revelation from God.

But what is deism? The true meaning of the word, is belief in the existence of one God; and where is the deist, who, without direct or indirect assistance from the Bible, can prove that there is a God—can tell us what is his character, what we have a right to expect from him, and what he requires of us? What can he tell us, of future, inexpressible, ceaseless blessedness? Deism, in the common acceptation of the term, rather implies hatred of revelation, than faith in the existence of the Supreme Being; it leads to, and generally ends in atheism. With these, we fear it is the hatred of what they call superstition, rather than the love of truth.

Dear young Friends; think of these things, and beware of the dangerous fallacy of supposing, that your children are to be uninstructed, until they are perfectly able to judge for themselves. You may then find it is too late, that their passions are at least as influential as their understanding, and that they will at least be as ingenious to find an excuse for the indulgence of these passions, as ingenuous to acknowledge the truth of a principle of intellectual wisdom. We think it was the opinion of Dr. Priestley, that if we do not teach our children right principles, other people will teach them wrong ones; and in this, at least, we do believe he was perfectly correct. But suppose your children are brought up in perfect ignorance; and such they must be if they are untaught, and have been fortunate enough to escape the influence of the passions, (a thing not at all probable,) you send them out to seek truth, is there not danger that among the conflicting sentiments even of the religious world, they might find it so difficult to separate truth from error, that they may be found among the number of those who are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; (2 Tim. iii. 7;) and that the end should be, that the pursuit would be given up as a hopeless task, and they would fall back into the state of ignorance in which they had been brought up, or, worse than this, into the sceptical opinion, that truth is unattainable. You now, we trust, believe in the Christian religion; is it not a duty to acknowledge it? and what way more fit, than by uniting with that community which professes it in its greatest purity and simplicity? You may find your attention attracted by the fashionable religion of the day; (for, alas,

there is fashion even on the all-important subject of religion;) you may be attracted by loud pretensions to superior sanctity; or even fanaticism may not be without its claims; but we entreat you by the favour of God, and the duty you owe to him, let no earthly consideration sway you: consider this as a matter (as in truth it is) between God and your own souls, and that to him, and to him only, are you accountable; let the sense of your accountability never for a moment be out of sight; and, being convinced in your own mind, let no false shame move you; be not ashamed of Christ, lest he should be ashamed of you; (Mark viii. 38;) and may God fit and prepare you for that glory for which you were created.

My aged Friends. With us, the season of youthful pleasures is long since passed away; and the labours and the cares of middle age do not, or ought not, to press so heavily upon us as once they did. The bud hath blown, the flower hath flourished and faded, many of its leaves have fallen, and a slight blast of disease will leave what is left of life prostrate in the dust.

It is common to a proverb, that nothing in life is so uncertain as life itself. This is true at every age; but with us it is most certain, that the disease of mortality which was with us at our birth, will, by the course of nature, soon number us with the dead.

If, happily, our lives have been dedicated to God, then for us to die is gain; if, unhappily, a doubt should yet remain; what is the remedy, but earnest supplication and prayer, that God would enlighten the understanding, and lead us in the way everlasting. (Ps. cxxxix. 24.) Ask, and ye shall receive. (John xvi. 24.) It will indeed be a matter of regret, that so little is left to be devoted to

the service of God; but remember, that even a long life of continued obedience would not earn for us life eternal; for salvation is by grace, and life eternal is the gift of God; and when men do all that is commanded of them, they are yet unprofitable servants; they have done no more than their duty. (Luke xvii. 10.) Does the aged convert see in his own case the long suffering, patience, and mercy of God! then I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. xii. 1.)

Brethren and Friends of the Society and Congregation,—he, who now addresses you, would speak to you as a dying father would to his children. Live in peace; but this can never be, unless there is a unity of faith; without it there is no bond of union, nor can there ever be. Nor think it strange that we must be of one mind. Paul found it necessary to exhort to this effect. (Phil. iv. 2.) Then will you make your supplications to God with effect; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus. (Phil. iv. 7.) An association of men, knowing little or nothing of the way of salvation, may associate together for the purpose of enjoying their own speculations; and if they are assailed from the pulpit or the press, may think themselves persecuted; and they may continue for a time, nay, they may unite more closely for the common defence; but leave them to themselves, and they will soon sink into oblivion. That you may live in peace, consider well the character of Christ, who is our peace. (Eph. ii. 14.) He says of himself, that he is the *way*, and the *truth*, and the *life*; that

no man cometh to the Father but by him. (John xiv. 6.) Is he not then the only *way* to God? Is he not the fulfiller of the *truth* of the promise made by God in Eden? Is he not the *life* of the world? This is the groundwork of our hope; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. iii. 11.) Now what prophet or apostle, what created being, can take upon himself to say, that *he* is the foundation of the Christian's hope? for the hope of Israel is the Saviour. (Jer. xiv. 8.) God is our Saviour; the Lord Jesus Christ is our hope. (1 Tim. i. 1.) God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and therefore it is, that the ambassadors for Christ say, "as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.)

Is it possible that this can be true? We could not believe it, but that God hath said it; that the Almighty God, who spoke the world into being, and whose command could bring it to its original nothing, should thus condescend to beg and pray, to entreat and beseech his own creature, who had broken the law of his God, and of his own happiness; that he, the offended God, should thus humbly plead with his poor, fallen, sinful worm of the earth, that he would be pleased to be no longer angry with God, the giver of all the good this poor miserable creature ever had, or ever will have, in time or eternity. This is wonderful indeed; it is the humility and love of God. We talk of humility, and we require of the offender, that he should humble himself in the presence of him whom he hath offended, and sue for reconciliation. But the thoughts of God are not as our thoughts, neither his ways our ways. (Is. lv. 8.) Do you startle at the

idea of humility in God? It is no wonder that you do; and yet it is most true, that there is no being in existence so humble as our God. Would you have proof? behold, then, the love and the humility of God, in the fact, that Jesus left the bosom of the Father; took upon him our nature; *humbled* himself unto death, even the death of the cross. On this subject, see John i. 18. xvii. 5. Hebrews ii. 14—17. Philippians ii. 5—8. Look also at the result: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. ii. 9, 10.) "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Look, my friends, at this divine vision. (Rev. v. 13.) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John i. 29.)

That you may continue to live in peace, you must hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering; (Heb. x. 23.;) nor let us suppose, for a moment, that our rejection of an error will serve as a substitute for faith: he that hath had the Gospel preached to him, and believeth not, shall be damned, is just as true as that he that believeth shall be saved. (Mark xvi. 16.) There is no weapon of the enemy to which you are so much exposed, and by which you are so likely to fall, as the supposition, that because you clearly see wherein your neighbours are wrong, you yourselves must be right. Think not that we would say a word that would lead you to a spirit of doubt, or indifference; far from it—

we rather repeat the injunction, "hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering." Think of God, of the view he had in your creation, of the means he hath used for your salvation; nor let the scepticism of an unbelieving world make you hesitate to believe. The means which the wisdom of God hath appointed, must, of necessity, be that which will accomplish the desired object. Think of the Holy Ghost, your sanctifier, and resist him not. He is a comforter, for he testifies of Jesus. (John xv. 26.) O think, that, "Thou, God, seest me." (Gen. xvi. 13.) Thus walk with God, and indulge not in any thing, not even in a thought, that you would desire to hide from his all-seeing eye.

Live in peace with those around you; and if some do not see the extent of the grace of God, yet they may see clearly, that salvation is by Christ only; and while they testify of Christ, respect them for his name's sake; and if, indeed, they will permit you, show them the oath of God, that to him, the just God and Saviour, "every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." (Is. xlv. 21—25.) You will also meet with those who extol the love of God, as extending to the least and meanest of all his creatures; and while they acknowledge the atonement, they appear to us not to perceive its omnipotent sufficiency. With these we can agree, in the tenderness of the love, and the extent of the mercies of God; and if they will only acknowledge, that God is as great as he is good, that the Almighty God is the Saviour, and that he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied, (Is. liii. 11.,) what great ground of difference would remain? Would those two great parties only agree to lay aside the phi-

losophy of men, the doctrines of fate and free will, and each acknowledge what is distinctly taught, or fairly inferrible from Scripture, would there not be a unity of faith, and a peace among professors of Christianity, which has not existed, time out of mind? There is one thing in which, however, they do agree, and that is, in the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity; this is a doctrine which we believe has been greatly misunderstood, and, therefore, misrepresented.

The first acknowledgment of three persons in one God, may excite the scorn of those who have long been in the habit of thinking otherwise; and yet there is something analogous in the man himself, for he is spirit, and soul, and body, (1 Thes. v. 23.,) and yet but one man. How these are distinguished, each from the others, and yet the three but one, may be difficult for him to tell, but if he believes the Scriptures, he knows it to be true.

To dwell on the subject of the Trinity, is not our intention; he who desires this, may gratify himself with the numerous books written on it. Let it suffice at present to say, that while the personal pronoun is used in Scripture to designate God, we also may be permitted to use it; and as to the personality of Jesus Christ, we think it cannot be denied by any who acknowledge that he ever existed. His divinity, or proper deity, we have ever maintained. And the personality of the Holy Ghost we must acknowledge, when the personal pronoun is used in reference to him four times in one verse. The Holy Ghost is called the comforter: (John xiv. 26.:) "When the comforter is come, *he* shall testify of me." (John xv. 26.) The comforter is spoken of as the spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, be-

cause it seeth *him* not, neither knoweth *him*, but ye know *him*; for *he* dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John xiv. 17.) What Christian Universalist can refuse to join in the doxology which says,

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree,
To save a world of sinners lost,
Eternal glory be?

Much more might be said on the subject of doctrine; but this letter is now longer than was intended.

Before we close, we would say something on the subject of the way in which principles of religion are sometimes asserted or defended from the press. When you find the style or sentiments such as are unworthy the character either of the gentleman or the Christian, give them no kind of countenance; they will poison the minds of your children; you, yourselves, will suffer by them. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt?" (Prov. vi. 27.) "Their word will eat as doth a canker." (2 Tim. ii. 17.) And remember, that "he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 11.)

Your spiritual welfare is dear to the friend who writes to you; he is the only living person of those with whom the Society originated, and with the exception of two or three annual elections, (when he was necessarily absent from you,) he has been one of your public speakers; and for the last twenty-two years he has been annually elected public speaker, and your presiding Elder. He hath endeavoured to discharge the duty incumbent upon him faithfully, avoiding the influence of the fear of man which bringeth a snare, and he hath en-

deavoured to put his trust in the Lord, and is yet safe. (Prov. xxix. 25.) He has reason to be thankful, that his labours have not been entirely in vain. This has been repeatedly attested by you, and that not long since. May he not, then, with humility ask you to bear in mind what an apostle saith of himself: "Though you have ten thousand instructers in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you, through the Gospel." (1 Cor. iv. 15.)

He who hath nearly closed his sixty-fourth year cannot expect to continue long with you. More than half of his whole life hath been spent with you, and for you; the fragment that yet remains offers him little to hope or fear; the day of his departure cannot but be near; and when he is gone, you will probably find many applicants to fill his place. May the man whom you will select be of like precious faith; for, believe me, an unbeliever will do you no good. But be he whom he may, you must support him; this is the law of God, as taught by the apostle Paul, when he introduces the subject, by saying, Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? See his reasoning, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. ix. 7—14., both inclusive. Nay, the Saviour of the world himself teaches this doctrine; for when he first sent out his apostles, he forbids them to draw upon their own resources, saying, provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. (Mat. x. 10, 11.)

In the prospect of persecution, they were required to take purse and scrip, and he that had no sword, to

sell his garment, and buy one. (Luke xxii. 35—38.) But where this reason does not exist, the former rule must hold good.

Paul may have had reasons for his independent conduct toward the Corinthians, that will not apply generally in the present state of the church; and there may be some peculiar cases even now, in which a man may think it his duty to sink with the church with whom he is connected; but can it be his duty to sink by it?

It was intended to have introduced into this letter something of what might be called the writer's religious experience; but there is not room. He may at some future period do this, if God is pleased to continue his life and health; but all that belongs to the future of this life is uncertain. When the hand that now writes to you is mouldering in the dust, and the heart that now beats for your best interest feels no more, may the Lord, in his great goodness, raise up for you an evangelist, who will be faithful to God and you, with whom you will be pleased, and who will have reason to be pleased with you; this is the ardent prayer of him who thinks he may, with some good degree of propriety, subscribe himself,

Your long-tried Friend,
and faithful Servant,
EDWARD MITCHELL.

New-York, July 1st, 1833.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF THE

SOCIETY OF UNITED CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

IN

THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

INSTITUTED MAY 1, 1796.

The Society of United Christian Friends originated in the following manner:

Late in March, or on the afternoon of Friday, the first of April, 1796, George Roberts, who, we believe, was then the presiding Elder of the Methodist Society, of the city of New-York, called on Abraham E. Brouwer, at his house, and informed him that he did not come to controvert the subject of universal salvation with him, but to inform him that, as he held that doctrine, it was not proper that he should at the same time hold an office in the church. The reply of Mr. Brouwer was, I have frequently offered my class paper to Mr. Dickens, and he has as often refused to take it; but now, sir, you are welcome to it; and accordingly handed it to him. When Mr. Roberts was at the door, about to go away, Robert Snow, who had long been the intimate friend of Mr. Brower, presented himself from the street, and the

term brother was reciprocated between them. Mr. Roberts went away, and Mr. Snow went in. He was soon informed of what had taken place, and, after some conversation, Mr. Snow came to the house of the writer, and asked him to go with him to brother Brouwer's. Here the writer was soon informed of what had taken place. After a long consultation, we thought it probable that the intention of Mr. Roberts was to follow up his act of discipline by expulsion; but, to put the matter beyond doubt, we determined to wait on him the next morning; which we did. Mr. Snow was our spokesman, and informed him that our visit to him was in consequence of his visit of the preceding evening, to our brother Brouwer, and that we thought, that as he had taken from Mr. Brouwer his class paper, perhaps he intended to excommunicate. His reply was, "that was my intention!" He was then told that on the subject of religion, we were all of one mind; that what he intended to do with one, we supposed he would do with all; and that as it was not common to exclude from a religious society for a mere difference of opinion, and as we were all men in business, our characters were dear to us; and we requested that he would be so good as give us a certificate, stating that it was not for any immorality of conduct, but for this difference, that we were thus excluded. He answered, that there would be a meeting of the leaders that evening, and that he would lay the matter before them.

In the course of the day, we waited on Mr. Daniel Smith, who had formerly been a settled preacher in the city, but who was then a local preacher; and with whom we were on very good terms of intimacy; and of

whom we requested, that as he would be at the meeting that evening, he would not advocate our cause, but urge a decision of it. The meeting was held, and the subject of the morning stated. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Roberts—brother Roberts, do you ask our opinion that you may know what we think, or that you may be governed by it? The answer was: I cannot say that I will be governed by your opinion, unless it agrees with my own. The meeting broke up without coming to any decision.

Thinking ourselves aggrieved by the situation in which Mr. Roberts' conduct had placed us, we wrote him a note on the subject, urging him to a decision of our case; that if upon fair inquiry we should be deemed worthy of expulsion, he would proceed to that without delay; that if the contrary, he would then publicly acknowledge us as acceptable members of the Methodist Church in the city of New-York. The answer was, that he was yet of the same mind as he was when he conversed with us; and that he would act accordingly, unless we would previously withdraw. After waiting two weeks, another note was written to him, still urging him to a decision; and if it was not agreeable to him to do this publicly, then proposing a more private one, by a note from him, and furnishing a form of private exclusion, and one of continuance, notwithstanding our being Universalists. This was answered by a note, stating that he had found that it was his duty not to be hasty in his conclusions, and that neither authority nor resolution were wanting in him to carry this business into effect. To us this appeared very much like saying, I will exclude you, but I will choose my own time to do it. We also thought that he might hope, by delaying the ex-

ercise of the authority which he supposed he had, to find something else, that would serve as an excuse independent of our religious opinions; and after waiting another week, we took leave of him, and the church to which he belonged, by a note, saying:

Sir, as you cannot, or will not, do us the justice to which we are entitled, we do not choose any longer to continue in this condition. Therefore, from the date hereof, we shall no longer consider ourselves as members of the Methodist Society, nor subject to its precarious discipline. Signed,

ABM. E. BROUWER.
ROBT. SNOW.
EDWD. MITCHELL.

New-York 28th April, 1796.

Some time after, we were read out of the Methodist Society, as *withdrawn*.

The circumstances in the above statement are correct; for though it is now more than thirty-seven years since they took place, they were of such interest in their nature, and of so much importance in their results—they have been so often the subject of conversation, both with friends and enemies, that they could not be easily forgotten; and they are now fresh in the memory of the writer; and the more so, as a difference of opinion has ever existed between him and Mr. Brouwer relative to their separation from the Methodist Church: the latter insisting that they had only withdrawn, while the former maintained, that they had been as literally turned out as that man had been who, having been invited into a house, was afterwards told, that unless he took his

leave, he should be put out by force, and, after some altercation, thought fit to walk out. Was he, or was he not, turned out? The original letters of Mr. Roberts are yet in existence, as are also the rough drafts of the letters of B., S., and M., in the handwriting of Robert Snow.

Thus situated, belonging to no church, we seriously considered what was our duty, as professors of religion, on the subject of worship. We knew that we could read the Scriptures together, pray to God for each other, sing the praise of God, our Saviour, and be helpers to each other in our common faith. We therefore determined to worship together, hoping for the enjoyment of the promise of Christ, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he would be with them.

As it is necessary that wherever men associate for any permanent purpose, they should distinctly understand by what rules they would govern themselves in their associate character, so we thought it best to draw up these rules; and while we were engaged in this work, sundry persons who had previously belonged to the Methodist Society, and who, with us, hoped for the final happiness of all men, united with us, and among these, Barnet Mooney, a highly esteemed friend, whose sound good sense was of great service to us in the formation of our constitution; he was the writer of the preamble to it. By its title we find its date, for it is called Constitution of the Society of United Christian Friends, established at New-York, May, 1796.

This constitution is signed by Abraham E. Brouwer President, and Jacob Clinch, Clerk.

In the course of this year we made a small selection of hymns for our own use, and published them with our constitution annexed. The preface to this little book was written by Robert Snow, and we find it signed by Abraham E. Brouwer, Elder, and Jacob Clinch, Clerk.

The prominent features of this constitution were as follows:

Article 1. declared the title, United Christian Friends.

Article 2. sec. 1. required that an Elder be chosen by ballot to serve one year, and not to be eligible for the succeeding year; and his duty was to watch over the interests of the Society. Sec. 2. A Steward chosen by ballot for one year, and not to be eligible for the succeeding year, to receive and pay all moneys, to provide for the Lord's supper and feast of charity, and report his accounts every three months. Sec. 3. A Clerk chosen by ballot, to serve one year, to keep the minutes, and register the names of the members of the Society.

Article 3. divides the society into classes, of not more than twelve, nor less than six, each class to choose its own leader, whose duty it was to see each member once a week, to inquire after their spiritual welfare, and to advise, reprove in love, comfort, or exhort, as occasion might require; to report to the Elder and Steward the case of such in his class as were sick or needy; and they three, or a majority of them, to give the requisite relief; the leader was not to serve the same class for more than three months successively.

Article 4. sec. 1. requires the observance of the Lord's supper. Sec. 2. appoints the first Sunday evening of each month to celebrate a feast of charity, to continue two hours, the last three quarters, to be ap-

propriated to speaking of particular experience. Sec. 3. says, the Society shall meet at convenient times for worship and mutual edification. Sec. 4. appoints the fourth Tuesday of May, in each year, to elect their servants. Sec. 5. appoints the first Tuesday in February, May, August, and November, to transact business.

Article 5. provides for the reception of new members, who must have been previously approved unanimously, and were required to answer in the affirmative on being questioned, 1. As to belief in the existence of God the Creator, and accountability at the day of judgment. 2. Faith in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah; and that he was sent into the world for the salvation of mankind. 3. That the Scriptures are a revelation from God, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice. 4. A determination to be devoted to God. 5. A punctual attendance on the means of grace. These answers being given, the Elder gave the right hand of fellowship, in the presence of the Society.

Article 6. acknowledges baptism as an ordinance of the Gospel; but as to the subjects, and mode of administering, each member is left to his own discretion.

Article 7. is of the expulsion of members, and makes the rule as found Mathew xviii. 15, 16, 17.

Article 8. is of laws, and requires the assent of three fourths of the members present, before the law shall pass.

These articles close with a declaration of willingness to permit the use of their religious means to Christians of any name, provided the party be first introduced to the Elder, by a member.

It is a matter of regret, that the first Church Book of

the Society is not now to be found. The one now in use begins with a constitution differing from the first, and is dated 1st August, 1798. The list of members, which immediately follows, begins with the date of 1796, May 1st, which appears to fix the *day* of the Society being formed. Fourteen names are of this date; and it is not unworthy of notice, that of these fourteen, ten are now dead. One soon returned to England, his native country, and has never since been in America; one has for some time been prevented by ill health, from taking an active part; one appears no longer interested. So that of the founders, the writer alone is left, (June, 1833,) an active member of the Society of United Christian Friends. The Society first worshipped in a room, in the house of Abraham E. Brouwer, but the number of the members increasing, it was judged expedient to build; and a house was accordingly erected near where the free Episcopal Church in Vandewater-street now stands. Shortly after the erection of their first house, the writer proposed that the Society should be incorporated, but it was not approved. His secular affairs calling him to remove from the city, he was absent part of '98 and '99; returning May, '99. During his absence, Mr. Murray, of Boston, visited the city and preached, but not in the house of the Society. November 12th, 1800, it was determined that a proposition, made a month previous, to have the Society become a body corporate, and to hold an election on the 17th inst. for trustees, should be accepted. And the election was held accordingly, on the 17th of November, 1800. On December 3d, of the same year, Robert Snow declined acting any longer as Elder. A deputation immediately

waited on him, to persuade him to continue; but his answer was, that he could no longer hold that office, for which he found himself inadequate. He and Mr. Brouwer left the Society at this time, and their names have opposite them the word *withdrawn*. December 15th, 1800, another constitution was adopted, something different from the second, inasmuch as it entirely omits class meetings. March 24th, 1807, the constitution which has governed the Society ever since was adopted. It differs from those preceding, by omitting the feast of charity.

When it is considered that the first members of the Society, had all been members of the Methodist Society, it is not to be wondered at, that they should have class meetings and the feast of charity. The first is well calculated for those who know little more of religion, than that they desire to flee from the wrath to come; and for such we believe it was first principally intended; and if continued with propriety, may be useful to those who have made further progress in faith. And the feast of charity, as conducted among the Methodists, may, with their views of religion, be very profitable to them. In the Society of United Christian Friends it was a very temperate repast, a friendly, social, religious meal; and its tendency was to refresh the wearied mind, and to cement the bond of brotherhood. The only danger to be apprehended from such meetings, is, that in conversation some may be led to express themselves in a way that may appear like debate; and this must ever be unprofitable. If it be asked, why then were the class meetings and feast of charity laid aside? the answer is easy. Neither of them is the command of God, and therefore not strictly obligatory

on men. The first was observed for more than four years, and the last for more than ten years. During this time many members were added to the Society, who, for various reasons, considered these institutions as not required of God, nor necessary in themselves; and therefore in the formation of the present constitution they were omitted. In June, 1803, the Society determined that the writer be ordained as a regular Minister; and he was ordained accordingly on the 18th of July in that year. In the spring of 1810 he received an invitation to settle in Boston, as the colleague of the Rev. John Murray; and it resulted in his acceptance of that invitation. Previous to his departure, he delivered the following address, which it is deemed proper to insert, as showing his motives in making the change.

To the Society of United Christian Friends, and the Members of the Congregation who with them worship in Magazine-street.

Beloved Friends and Brethren,

When I address you with this double epithet, I hope it will not be considered as an invidious distinction of character; for the spirit of friendship is the strongest tie of brotherhood.

Your speaker believes, that the circumstances of the moment make it necessary for him to present you with a brief, but comprehensive view of the origin and progress of this worshipping assembly.

About fourteen years since, three persons were driven from the Methodist Society by the disgraceful threat of expulsion; and the only reason given to justify this severity was, that these men confessed a hope that God,

the great Parent of mankind, would finally bring the very last even of his prodigal children to the enjoyment of the riches and glory of their Father's house.

Thus excluded from one religious community, and believing that their hope would prevent their cordial reception into any other, they felt it a duty to associate together, and to worship God alone.

Others of the same Society, finding themselves in a like predicament, joined with these, and they united in forming those regulations which should afterwards govern their social and public worship.

The Society soon increased, so that a house for their accommodation as a worshipping assembly became necessary, and was procured at *their private individual expense.*

In the process of time, inconveniences appeared to arise from their not being known as a corporate body. The benign spirit of the law of the state of New-York for the incorporation of religious societies, pointed out the remedy, and they became a body corporate, by the title of The Society of United Christian Friends. Here let it be observed, that the principles both of law and equity forbad that any but members of the Society should be known in this incorporation; for no one had contributed, either directly or indirectly, to its support; pride, or a mistaken idea of independence, had hitherto prevented the reception of any external aid.

When the house in which you now worship was for sale, various reasons appeared to make it desirable to procure it; but the magnitude of the subject made a public subscription indispensable. Something was procured in this way; the members of the Society were

as liberal as their means would allow, and the purchase was made. The interest of that part of the purchase money which was still unpaid, together with the incidental expenses of the house, made it necessary to rent the pews; hence arises a distinction which is known to exist between those who, as pew-holders, are members of the Congregation only, and those who are members of the incorporated Society; a distinction, which can be considered as arising only from the incorporation having taken place at a time, when the Society alone bore the whole expense of worship, and the law, of course, could recognise *them* only.

Totally to do away this distinction would now require a special law of the state; but perhaps this is not desirable: for it is believed, that those who have evinced their attachment to the doctrine of God their Saviour, by their stated attendance in this place of worship, have always found the Society ready, with open arms, to receive them as brethren in the Lord.

A distinguishing feature in the organization of the Society was a plurality of public speakers, who undertook their labours without the least idea of pecuniary reward. While a plurality of speakers existed, the labour was comparatively light, and when at one time it consisted of five persons, it could scarcely be considered as a labour; but when, from various circumstances, the number was reduced to two, and the speakers found themselves before a large audience, it became a labour; but the burthen was borne with pleasure. At this time it was judged expedient, that one should be set apart, who should devote his whole time and talents to the defence of *this* truth, that *God* is the *Saviour* of *all*

men, and *specially of them that believe*. And as this would necessarily prevent him from attending to the secular employment, by which he had hitherto supported himself and his family, it was provided that this support should be furnished to him by those for whose profit and pleasure he thus laboured; and the person who has since officiated as Elder of the Society, was publicly acknowledged as the ordained minister of God.

We pass by the circumstances which immediately ensued, as unnecessary to our present purpose, and beg leave to state the sentiments, which your Elder has uniformly maintained on the subject of an established ministry. And first, that in the technical language of the schools, to educate a young man for the ministry, and to bring him forward in that character, merely that he may obtain by it a support, is to lay him under the temptation to advocate as truth what he knows to be false, or, at least, to pass by in silence those parts of the system which he has nominally espoused, because he does not know them to be true. But that when a conviction of the truth exists in the mind, and the providence of God draws him forth to testify in its defence, if his whole time is engaged therein, and he is thereby prevented from having recourse to the ordinary means of support, reason and religion both say, that it is a duty enjoined on those who unite with him in religious sentiment, and among whom he labours, to render that support to him. (Mat. x. 9, 10.) On this subject the Saviour speaks in these words: "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat."

We have a right to judge of the sincerity of a man's professions, by the degree of correspondence which his actions bear to them. By this rule your speaker is willing to be judged, and by it to stand or fall. The most distinguished profession which he has made, has been, that pecuniary reward was not his object; that in testifying for the truth he discharged a duty, and found a great reward. Look, then, at his conduct in the recent circumstances which have led to his acceptance of the invitation from Boston, and say, has he been inconsistent with himself; or wanting in affection towards you?

On receiving the first letter desiring him to pay the Society there a visit, but at the same time avowing the probability of a call to a permanent residence, he put it it into the hands of a man, whom he has the happiness to call both a Friend and a Christian, and offered to sign any letter he would write as an answer, provided it did not contain any thing evidently absurd, (a thing not to be supposed.) This was declined. Perhaps the question was improper. And this circumstance is now stated, only to show, that from the beginning he has been desirous to submit to others the determination of this important question, rather than take it upon himself. During his absence at Boston, the circumstances, under which he went, were well known to those who worship here; and after his return, when he received an invitation to settle there, he published it from the pulpit here. In private intercourse he sought the advice of those who, he supposed, would most impartially weigh the merits of the case. But from these the usual answer was, this is a case in which no one can advise

you; you must judge for yourself. He has always declared, that he believed the people here could do without him, and that his labours there would be more useful, inasmuch as his whole time would be devoted to one object. If, therefore, in following the dictates of his own judgment, he has erred, it is an error of the judgment only.

If pecuniary motives should be hinted, as having influence, he appeals to his most intimate associates, whether he did not hesitate on the question of duty calling him to remove, even at the hazard of abridging the usual enjoyments of his family. He would call to your remembrance, that he has rejected the invitation of a fond mother to return to his native country, receive, as a free gift, a stock in trade, and enter on the enjoyment of a lucrative business. Though other reasons had a degree of weight, the preponderating argument was the discharge of duty as a Christian minister. He has, in the course of the last year, twice rejected propositions which it would have been extreme folly to refuse under ordinary circumstances, and were refused, only because he thought they would, at some future time, prevent his being able to accept a situation that would permit him to devote more of his time to the study of the Scriptures, and the propagation of their truth. Will it be said, that though all this may be true, interest has, at last, prevailed. He would only remark, that the disposition which has been shown here on this subject, is a sufficient reply.

Shall it be said, that the opportunity of speaking to a larger audience is such a temptation to his vanity, that he cannot resist it? This vanity is checked by the

consideration, that he will be only building on another man's foundation. This disposition is more likely to be fed by continuing here, among a people increasing in number, and likely to increase in a greater degree.

His conduct is, therefore, the result of his judgment, proceeding from a sense of duty. He makes no pretensions to infallibility; he may have erred, but he does lay claim to the merit of having intended well. He takes pleasure in the thought, that those who are most intimately acquainted with the merits of the case, will be most disposed to approve his motive; and he makes this statement principally with a view of giving information to those who, from want of knowledge, may have misjudged his conduct.

Brethren of the Society of United Christian Friends, remember the saying of your Redeemer: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Look on the members of the congregation, the steady habitual worshippers with you; and remember that among them are found some of the best informed, and most zealous advocates of the Redeemer. Draw them with the cords of love as with the bands of a man, and we trust your labour of love shall not be in vain.

Ye who are members of the congregation, but not of the Society,—if your hearts are with us, why not cast your lot among us; and thus strengthen the bond of union which already exists.

Ye who are but transient visiters; we entreat you to believe of us, that Christ is the foundation of our hope, and the top stone of our rejoicing—that we believe he tasted death for *every man*, and that he shall see of the *travail of his soul* and be *satisfied*.

Friends of the Redeemer, by whatever name ye are known, contend earnestly, but affectionately, for the faith once delivered to the saints—the faith of Abraham, who believed God, when he told him that in Christ, the promised seed, should all the nations of the earth be blessed; and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Manifest to the world, that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, teacheth you, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, you should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. And may the God of grace and glory bless you for ever and ever. Amen. EDWD. MITCHELL.

New-York, August 5th, 1810.

When the writer was thus removed from the Society in New-York, he left it with the most sincere desire for its welfare, and the most reasonable assurance in his own mind, that it would prosper; and he entered on the discharge of his duties in Boston, under the apprehension, that such a successor to the celebrated John Murray, must by comparison appear to a great disadvantage. Yet the people appeared to be pleased with his exertions; and their kind attentions to him were such as can never be forgotten. They have ever been acknowledged, and ever will be. Here he thought he was to live, and die; he had no other expectation or desire. But the uncertainty of all earthly things is known to a proverb; and so he found it in this case, for his hopes for New-York were not realized. It is unnecessary now to inquire into the reasons why; but, it is proper here to state the proceedings of the Society in New-York. "The Trustees conceiving that it would

promote the interest of the church by recalling the Rev. Mr. Edward Mitchell from Boston, they appointed a meeting of the Society and Congregation, on Tuesday evening, 23d July, 1811.

"The purport of the meeting was then stated by brother Clinch, and investigation invited. No objection being made to recalling Mr. Mitchell, the question was put by the Chairman, and passed in the affirmative, nearly unanimously.

"A correspondence then commenced between the Trustees and Mr. Mitchell, and the Committee of the Society in Boston, (copies of which are in the possession of the clerk,) and which ended in Mr. Mitchell's accepting the call of the Trustees. And he accordingly arrived here on the 22d day of October, 1811; and commenced his public labours on the Sunday following."*

Was the writer then ungrateful to his numerous friends in Boston? No, but he would not easily forget the Society in New-York, of which he was then the oldest member; for which he had made some sacrifices, and laboured sedulously for many years. In the hope of meeting the wishes of all parties, he proposed to the Society in Boston, that the pulpit should be considered vacant; that in the mean time he would discharge its duties; and when an acceptable successor was found, he would resign; and that if, in the mean time, a suitable person was found to fill the pulpit in New-York, then no Society but that in Boston should have any claim on him. This proposition was not noticed; and he has long been convinced, that, had it been accepted, New-

* Taken from the Trustees' book.

York would have been supplied, and his residence continued in Boston.

On his leaving Boston, the Rev. Paul Dean became his successor, as the colleague of Mr. Murray, and continued so till the death of Mr. Murray. Some time after this, the Boston Congregation divided, and a new house was built, which Mr. Dean was to occupy; and the old Congregation invited the writer to return to them; but his answer was, that as the people whom he served appeared to be satisfied with him, and he had no reason to be dissatisfied with them, there could be no propriety in his leaving them. The writer was invited to attend, and officiate at the opening of the new house; and did accordingly attend. It is a little remarkable that the chairman of the committee thus inviting him, had been chairman of the committee of the old house, at the time of his leaving Boston.

On the writer's return to New-York, in 1811, he received a hearty welcome; and the affairs of the Society went on prosperously; so much so, that "At a meeting of the Trustees, held at the meeting house 22d July, 1816, it was stated by the Treasurer that in consequence of an address publicly made by the Rev. Mr. Edward Mitchell to the Congregation, at the request of the Trustees, a considerable addition had been made to the subscription list for his support."* On this his salary was raised fifty per cent.* This address was laid on the table for the inspection of those who thought fit to examine it; and the writer of this would have no objection to furnish it, or extract from it, but it shortly after disappeared, and he has never been able to recover

* Taken from the Trustees' book.

it; and though he may probably yet have the rough draught from which it was written, it will at present suffice to say, that it contained a statement of the probable current expenses of his family; and this amounted to above a half more than what he then received.

On the 17th of September, 1817, the Trustees met, and considered "the subject of building a new house of worship;"* and the necessity for this measure was proved pretty evidently by one of the friends placing himself where he determined the fact, that of a Sunday evening, not more than one third of those who came to the church could gain admittance.

"The Congregation assembled the 22d of September, 1817, and subscribed, as loans, eight thousand eight hundred and thirty dollars, and as donations, two hundred and twenty-three dollars."*

Ground was rented from the late Mr. George Janeway, "and Samuel Tooker, Isaac Pierson, and Isaac Marquand, were chosen a committee, to be denominated the Building Committee, with power to erect and complete a new meeting house, at the corner of Duane and Augustus streets."*

The church was built at an expense of more than twenty thousand dollars; and the time it was opened may be judged from the following memorandum.

Sunday, 20th of December, 1818, the Trustees met after service in the new church.*

For nearly seven years the new church appeared to do well; but about that time their finances became re-

* Trustees' book.

duced, from causes not now to be dwelt on; and as a remedy, recourse was had to the reduction of the salary of their Minister. On the thirteenth of May, 1828, he received a communication on the subject, of which the following is the close: "And that the said Treasurer be, and he is hereby requested to assure Mr. Mitchell, that the foregoing arrangement arises solely from the necessity of the case, owing to the reduced state of the funds of the Society; and he is further requested to assure Mr. Mitchell, that the Trustees feel a deep regret in being obliged to resort to this necessary measure, in order to sustain the cause which he and they feel so much interest in; and he is further authorized to assure Mr. Mitchell, that if, in the course of Divine Providence, the temporal concerns of the Society should warrant it, the Trustees will feel great pleasure in rewarding his highly esteemed services in some way proportioned to their acknowledged merit."* We find little more of the book of the Trustees after this period, than the ordinary routine of electing Trustees, passing the accounts of their Treasurer, &c., excepting another resolution on the subject of their Minister's salary, dated May 12th, 1829. We pass it by without further notice for the present. If these things were painful to the Trustees, and such members of the Society and Congregation as were acquainted with them, they cannot be less so to the writer of this article.

*Trustees' book.

CATECHISM,

FOR THE USE OF THE

SOCIETY OF UNITED CHRISTIAN FRIENDS.

Question. Do you make any profession of religion?

Answer. I do.

Q. What religion do you profess?

A. The Christian.

Q. What is the Christian faith?

A. I will tell you:—I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hell; The third day he rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy Catholic Church; The communion of Saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. *Amen.*

Q. Why do you believe in the existence of God?

A. Because that which may be known of God is manifest to us; for God hath showed it unto us. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are

clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. (Rom. i. 19, 20.)

Q. Why is God called Father?

A. Because it is a term applicable to the author of being, whether mental or physical, and therefore strictly applicable to the Author of all being. Because Jesus Christ instructs us to address him by that endearing name. Because he discharges to us all the duties belonging to that character, by providing for all our wants, natural and spiritual, giving us the perishing bread that supports the perishing body; the bread of life that came down from Heaven, that we might feed by faith, and live for ever; by instructing us in wisdom; by warning us of the evil of transgression; by correcting our wanderings, and yet still loving us freely.

Q. Why is God the Father called Almighty?

A. Because he sustains not only all the attributes of a father's character, but each in infinite degree.

Q. What necessity is there for introducing God the Father Almighty, as Maker of Heaven and Earth, when this is implied in his being acknowledged as Creator?

A. Because these sensible objects are ever before us; in them we constantly see the magnitude and the minuteness of the works of God. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. (Ps. xix. 2.)

Q. Why is Jesus Christ called the Son of God?

A. Because he came not by the will of man, but of God, who says, (Ps. ii. 7.,) Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Heb. i. 5.)

Q. What is the import of the name, Jesus Christ?

A. The name Jesus signifies Saviour, and was given to him (Mat. i. 21.) because he should save his people from their sins. Christ signifies anointed, and presents him to us as Prophet, Priest, and King of human nature. (Ex. xxx. 22—33. xxviii. 41. 1 Kings xix. 15, 16. Acts iv. 27. x. 38.)

Q. What advantages have we from this character of Jesus Christ?

A. As Jesus, we know him to be Saviour; and as Christ, we see the way of salvation: for as a Prophet, he instructs us, and tells us that he came to give himself for the life of the world; (John vi. 33. 51.;) as the High Priest of our profession, he offered himself on the cross; and when we behold this sacrifice, we are constrained to acknowledge him Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. (Rev. xvii. 14.)

Q. What proof have you that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a Virgin?

A. The angel Gabriel was sent from God (Luke i. 26.) to the Virgin Mary; (v. 27.;) he pronounced her blessed (v. 28.) with the favour of God; (v. 30.;) and informed her, that she should conceive a son, whom she should call Jesus; that his kingdom should have no end. And in answer to the difficulty of a virgin being a mother, was instructed that it should be by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that, therefore, the holy thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God.

Q. What proof have you, that Christ rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven?

A. The Apostles continually asserted this fact as the ground of their hope in him. After his death and burial, being risen from the dead, he conversed with them, and was seen of five hundred brethren at once. (Acts i. 1—11.) It was in the presence of the Apostles that he ascended.

Q. What do you mean by Christ sitting at the right hand of God?

A. We do not, strictly speaking, or as man would speak of his fellow man, attribute to God, personality, parts, or passions; but this mode of expression is necessary to make us familiar with the character of God, and his government of his creatures; and being thus understood, we speak of the hand of God, as expressive of his power; and the right hand of God, as descriptive both of power and of honour. (Acts vii. 55. Col. iii. 1.)

Q. Will Christ indeed come to judge the quick and the dead?

A. God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained. (Acts xvii. 31. Rom. ii. 16.)

Q. What do you believe of the Holy Ghost?

A. Ghost is synonymous with spirit. God is a Spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; (John iv. 24.;) and they who come to him, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. xi. 6.)

Q. What is the Holy Catholic Church, and why is it called so?

A. It is the company of true believers in all ages: and is Holy, because it is of God; Catholic, because it is universal; and Church, because the term signifies

the many assembled in one, or for one purpose; and believers, though many, are one body in Christ. (Rom. xii. 5. Col. i. 24.)

Q. What do you mean by the communion of Saints?

A. It is the common enjoyment which all the sanctified have with God in the sense of his presence, (Gen. v. 22. vi. 9.,) and which, individually, each has with every other. (Prov. xxvii. 17. Eph. iv. 5.)

Q. What do you believe respecting the forgiveness of sins?

A. I believe that the forgiveness of sin was one of the objects God had in view in the exaltation of Christ; (Acts v. 31.;) which Christ had in view in the commission he gave to Paul; (Acts xxvi. 18.;) and Paul, faithful to his commission, teaches redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, (Eph. i. 7.,) that God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us. (Eph. iv. 32. Col. i. 14.) God is said to be faithful and just to forgive us our sins, (1 John i. 9.,) and hath forgiven them for Christ's sake. (1 John ii. 12.)

Q. What do you believe of the resurrection of the body?

A. I believe, that in the resurrection, the natural body shall be raised in a state of improvement as much superior to its present state, as all our ideas of spirit, or mind, are superior to those of mere matter; for though the body is consigned to the earth as a natural body, in corruption, dishonour, and weakness; yet it shall be raised in incorruption, glory, and power, a spiritual body. (1 Cor. xv. 42—44.)

Q. What do you mean by life everlasting?

A. I mean a conscious sense of being and of bliss, without alloy, and without end. (1 John iii. 2. v. 11. John v. 26. xiv. 19.)

Q. Why do you say, amen?

A. Used at the close of a creed, it means, "so it is;" and may be considered as a repetition of the sentiments expressed in that creed.

Q. What are the attributes of God?

A. Wisdom, love, and power; each infinite.

Q. What proof have you of this?

A. In his word, and in his works.

Q. Do these constitute all the essential attributes of God?

A. They do.

Q. What proof have you of this?

A. Their union constitutes a perfect character. You cannot take from any of these attributes in the smallest degree, without destroying that perfection; nor can any thing be attributed to God, but what may be found in one of these attributes, or flowing from their union.

Q. Is not justice an attribute of God?

A. Justice in Deity, is that unerring wisdom which discerns between guilt and innocence, united with the power which executes a just sentence.

Q. Do any of these attributes appear in Jesus?

A. They are all manifest in the Redeemer, who, by wisdom, spake as never man spake; by the love of God, offered himself a sacrifice for sin; and by the omnipotence of his power, rose from the dead, the triumphant conqueror of death and the grave.

Q. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Q. What rule hath God given, to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q. What is God?

A. God is a spirit; self existent, unchangeable, infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness.

Q. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q. Under what manifestations hath God made himself known to men?

A. He hath manifested himself under the several, but not contradictory characters of Father, Word, and Spirit.

Q. How doth he manifest himself as Father?

A. This, being a name given to whatever is the author of being, is most appropriately given to God, the creator of all; and is especially due to him as discharging all the duties which belong to a father's character: by providing for all, instructing all, correcting all, and never ceasing to love all.

Q. What hope do we derive from this knowledge of the attributes of God?

A. Infinite love must desire our happiness; infinite wisdom must know the means which will effect this

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gracious desire ; and infinite power must be able to destroy all that would impede.

Q. What was the character of man, as he came from the hand of his Creator?

A. It was "very good;" for man was created male and female, in the image of God. (Gen. i. 27, 31.)

Q. Did he continue in that state?

A. He fell by transgressing the law of his Maker. The woman was deceived by the serpent; and her husband willingly and knowingly joined in her offence. (Gen. iii. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 14.)

Q. What followed this transgression?

A. The sin of our first parents was followed by the sentence of God, which was sorrow and death. (Gen. iii. 17. 19.)

Q. What is the effect of the fall on the human race?

A. In Adam all die; (1 Cor. xv. 22;) and men are by nature children of wrath. (Eph. ii. 3. *Institutes* b. 2. ch. 1.) Every one who has come to the knowledge of good and evil, knows that he is not only led away by the deceitfulness of sin, but that he often sins against the clearer light of his better judgment. (Rom. vii. 17, 18.)

Q. Does God leave man in this deplorable state, and give him no hope of redemption?

A. By no means, he hath not left himself without evidence of his good will to man, in the gifts of nature; (Acts xiv. 17;) and when our first parents transgressed, he promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. (Gen. iii. 15.)

Q. What is the special import of that promise?

A. That the evil which had entered into the world, should be totally destroyed.

Q. Hath that work of deliverance been accomplished?

A. Christ, the promised seed, (Gal. iii. 16,) took on him our nature, or flesh and blood; and in that nature tasted death for every man; (Heb. ii. 9;) that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

Q. How then is it, that we do not see every man freed from this bondage?

A. Christ hath indeed finished the work given him to do. (John xvii. 4.) When he hung on the cross, and had received the vinegar, he said "it is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. (John xix. 30.) Thus the atoning sacrifice was made, by his giving his flesh for the life of the world. (John vi. 51.) But the effect of this sacrifice is progressive; for it was enjoined on the elders of the church, to take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers—to feed the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.)

Q. Is there further evidence, that the effect of Christ's atoning sacrifice is progressive?

A. There is; for it is written, that Christ gave gifts unto men; some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ till we all come

in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. iv. 8. 11, 12.)

Q. What is the work of the ministry?

A. To preach the Gospel to every creature. (Mark xvi. 15.)

Q. What is the Gospel?

A. It is the promise God made to Abraham, and fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

Q. What was that promise?

A. In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; (Gen. xxii. 18;) and this seed is Christ. (Gal. iii. 16.)

Q. What is the blessing thus given?

A. Eternal life; for the record of God is, that he hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. (1 John v. 11.)

Q. What is the body of Christ?

A. The head of every man is Christ. (1 Cor. xi. 3.) We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Eph. v. 30.)

Q. May we not be excusable, even if we should not believe that God hath given us this life in his Son?

A. We are utterly inexcusable: we treat God with indignity, we commit blasphemy, by charging him with falsehood; for he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar. (1 John v. 10.)

Q. What advantage is there enjoyed by the belief of this Gospel?

A. Present peace, and hope of future glory; for we which have believed do enter into rest; (Heb. iv. 3;) and though for the believer to live is Christ, (or the

joys of his salvation,) yet to die is gain; (Phil. i. 21;) it is to be with Christ, which is far better. (Phil. i. 23.)

Q. What disadvantage is there to the unbeliever?

A. While a man doubts of his salvation, we think he must fear, and we know that fear hath torment. (1 John iv. 18.) He is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Q. Does God require of us to believe without evidence?

A. Never; he invites us to come and reason with him, and promises, as the result, that though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Is. i. 18.)

Q. On what ground did Jesus condemn the Jews for rejecting him?

A. He appeals to his teaching and miracles, saying: If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin; and if I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin. (John xv. 22, 24.)

Q. Will the Jew always remain under the divine displeasure?

A. No; for the blindness under which he now wanders is happened, in part, to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. They are yet beloved for the fathers' sakes. (Rom. xi. 25, 26. 28.)

Q. Is the Gentile an inheritor of the promises made to the Jewish people?

A. He is; for Christ, who is our peace, hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, and through him we both have access, by one spirit, unto the Father. (Eph. ii. 13—18.)

Q. Is the Gospel of salvation to be preached to unbelievers?

A. It is; and was so preached at Ephesus; for, after they had heard the word of truth, the Gospel of their salvation, they trusted in Christ. (Eph. i. 13.)

Q. If the object of Christ was, that he might reconcile both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body, by the cross, is not the ultimate result, that all are the saved of the Lord?

A. It is; for on this very account the apostles both laboured and suffered reproach, because they trusted in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. (1 Tim. iv. 10.)

Q. Can God be the Saviour of unbelievers?

A. He can, and is; for surely the members of the Church of Ephesus were unbelievers before they heard the Gospel of their salvation; but, hearing the good news, and believing it to be true, they then trusted in Christ, even in that Saviour who had purchased them with his blood, when as yet they had no faith in him.

Q. If Christ is the Saviour of them that believe, how can he be the Saviour of all?

A. This text does not contradict itself. If God be the Saviour of all men, he is necessarily my Saviour; and I, believing that he is my Saviour, experience the special salvation as a necessary result of my faith in him as the Saviour of all, I have present peace and

rest, and the assurance of future glory. (Heb. iv. 3. Phil. i. 23.)

Q. Will not this doctrine of unbounded grace permit licentiousness?

A. The extreme reverse is the truth; for the grace of God, that bringeth salvation *to all men, hath appeared*, (the marginal reading,) teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. (Tit. ii. 11, 12.) This is the morality which the doctrine of the salvation of all men teacheth us. Now, passing by the negative of denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and even the positive duties of living soberly and righteously, we fix our attention on the life of godliness; we ask ourselves what is it? and where shall we find it? And the answer which presents itself to our understanding is, that godly is godlike, or like the life of God; and where shall we find what the life of God is so well as in the life of Jesus, who was God manifest in the flesh, and yet laid down his life for those by whose hands he was slain, and in his expiring breath prayed, saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do! (Luke xxiii. 34.) What morality can exceed this? Yet this is the morality which the grace that bringeth salvation to all men teacheth us.

Q. And do the professors of your religion act thus?

A. We are constrained to confess that we are not apt scholars; but the question was not what we do, but what the principles of our religion teach us to do.

Q. What are the general principles of Christian morality?

A. Love to God, and love to man. (Mat. xxii. 36—

40.) And these principles are given to us at large, in the book of Exodus, in the 20th chapter, from the 1st to the 18th verse.

Q. What think you of the observance of the Christian Sabbath?

A. The Jews were commanded to appropriate the seventh day (or seventh part of time) as a Sabbath, or rest from labour; and Christians in all ages, have been accustomed to consider the first day of the week as a Christian Sabbath; inasmuch as on this day their Lord triumphed over death by his resurrection; made himself known to the women who attended at his tomb; (Mat. xxviii. 9;) also the disciples going to Emmaus, where he was made known to them in the breaking of bread; (Luke xxiv. 31;) and in the evening of the same day, to his disciples, Thomas being absent; (John xx. 19—24;) and on that day week, the Christian Sabbath sennight, seven nights intervening, or eight days, the first and last being reckoned, Jesus was with his disciples, and offered Thomas the proof that he desired, that he might put his finger into the prints of the nails, and his hand into his side.

This was the second Christian Sabbath.

The disciples came together to break bread, on the first day of the week. (Acts xx. 7.)

Q. What appears to be the reasonable observance of the Christian Sabbath?

A. An entire abstinence from labour, works of necessity and mercy excepted.

Q. What should occupy our attention on that day?

A. The worship of God, in public and in private;

improvement of the mind, in the knowledge of God, of ourselves.

Q. You say that the disciples came together to break bread on the first day of the week. Why did they do so?

A. The Lord had commanded them to do this, in remembrance of him. And obedience on our part, is the observance of the Lord's supper.

Q. May we neglect this with impunity?

A. By no means; for as respects the natural body, we must eat bread or die; so, spiritually, we must partake of the body and blood of Christ, or there is no life in us. (John vi. 51.)

Q. Are all required to be partakers of the communion?

A. Whoever call Jesus Lord and Master, we think, are consequently bound, as his servants, to obey this command of their Lord and Master.

Q. But do we not run the hazard of eating and drinking condemnation?

A. Not so long as we act from a pure motive, and discern the Lord's body.

Q. What motive would render our observance impure?

A. When our object would be any secular advantage, such as honour, profit, or to be seen of men.

Q. What is it to discern the Lord's body, in this observance?

A. When we consider the bread as an emblem of the body of Christ, the bread of life; (John vi. 33;) the many grains now being united in one, constituting one bread, or piece of bread; and the distinctions

which may have existed in the harvest field no longer discernible; the bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for we being many are one bread and one body. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) And the last process through which bread passes to make it fit nutriment, is that of fire. The bread hath passed through this, and calls to our remembrance the sufferings of our Lord for our salvation. If we are sometimes called to the endurance of fiery trials, (1 Pet. iv. 12,) what must have been the sufferings of our Lord? Again, when we consider the kingdom of heaven as likened to leaven, which was hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened, (Mat. xiii. 33,) we think of Christ taking upon him our nature, body, soul, and spirit, and the divine influence thereof remaining till the least and last particle shall be fully saturated thereby.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? (1 Cor. x. 16.) Here also we observe the many in one, and the distinctions which may have existed in the vineyard, no longer discernible, but one cup and one quality; the wine an emblem of the blood of Christ; and when mixed with water, it calls to our remembrance that when the soldier's spear pierced the side of the Saviour, forthwith came thereout blood and water. By faith we see the fountain opened in the house of David, for sin and for uncleanness. (Zech. xiii. 1.)

Q. But may we not err through ignorance in this matter?

A. We may, and we fear many do. Thus, when any come to the table, considering their participation as

taking upon them, the most solemn oath of obedience to the law of God; what must the result be, but a conviction that they have vowed or sworn to the Lord and broken that oath or vow? The soul must then feel the sense of having committed perjury; and who that partakes under this mistaken sense of the matter, can for a day, or even an hour, say that he has not offended by deed, word, or thought? One evil thought entertained, makes him guilty in the eye of the law.

Q. Is it not better then to refrain altogether, seeing there is this danger?

A. No, for though it is our duty to seek the most perfect knowledge of what our duty is, yet still, the way of duty is the way of safety; and according to the measure of knowledge we have, we ought to obey. For it is the command of our Lord and Master, that we should eat and drink in remembrance of him. And it is worthy of our observation, that although the Corinthians erred so greatly, as to turn the observation of the supper into something like a bacchanalian feast, and for which some were weak and sickly, and many slept (1 Cor.xi. 30.) the sleep of death; the apostle immediately adds, that when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should no be condemned with the world.

Q. Have we a right to forbid any from coming to the table?

A. We have no right; the act itself is an acknowledgment of the Lord, who says, do this; and we know no reason why we should assume authority, and forbid obedience in this case, that would not apply to any and every other command of God. In the judgment of

charity, we ought to suppose the party sincere. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. (Rom. xiv. 4.)

Q. What think you of the doctrine of repentance?

A. Repentance is a change of purpose, and may be evinced to man by a change of practice. Repentance toward God is a rejection of all trust in, and love to any created thing, in comparison with the trust we ought to have in, and love to God, and an entire and unbounded trust in, and love to God.

Q. What is the state of the man who trusts in man, and not in God?

A. He is condemned of God; is like the heath in the desert, and doth not see when good cometh. (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.)

Q. What is the state of the man who trusts in God?

A. He is blessed of God; he is as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. (Jer. xvii. 7, 8.)

Q. What think you of the doctrine of baptism?

A. External baptism is the mode of entrance into the visible church; the baptism of the Spirit is the influence on the mind of those truths which the Spirit of truth teacheth. (John iii. 3—11.)

Q. What is the doctrine of regeneration?

A. It is when by faith in the abundant mercy of God, he hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Pet. i. 3.)

Q. Why should the resurrection of Christ give us this hope?

A. Because he, being delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification; therefore, being justified, by believing these truths of his being so delivered for our offences, and raised for our justification, we have, as the necessary consequence, peace with God; and we have it thus through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. iv. 25. v. 1.)

Q. What is the new birth?

A. It is the being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you. (1 Pet. i. 23. 25.)

Q. Is it a moral duty to believe in Jesus?

A. It is; for if we do not, God will require it of us. (Deut. xviii. 19.) This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John iii. 23.)

Q. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

A. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. (Eccl. xii. 13.)

MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

(*The officiating minister, addressing the bridegroom, says:*)

Your name, sir, is —— ——. (*Assent being given, then to the bride:*)

Your name, madam, is —— ——. (*Assent being given, then to the bridegroom:*)

Do you, sir, desire to take this woman to be your lawful wife? (*Assent being given, then to the bride:*)

Do you, madam, desire to take this man to be your lawful husband? (*Assent being given, then say:*)

When God made man, he saw that it was not good for him to be alone, and he gave him a help meet for him; that help is woman. If there is any thing that belongs merely to this life, that is of more importance than another, it is the contract you are now about to form; for on your wisely entering into it, and your faithfully discharging its duties, each to the other, will depend your future happiness through life.

God, the great and gracious Author of our being, has encouraged us to look to him, and promised, that he will give wisdom, will give liberally, and not upbraid; let us therefore pray:

Almighty God, we adore thee, that thou hast made the throne of thy grace accessible to us, and that at all

times, and in every place, we may approach thy divine presence in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. We pray thee, that thou wouldst be pleased to look down upon us with thy wonted goodness, and especially upon thy servant and handmaid, who desire to be united in wedlock; give them wisdom to discern, and grace to discharge, the duties that belong to the character of husband and of wife; that they may be a blessing each to the other, and an example of connubial bliss to the circle in which they move. Unto thee, O God, would we ascribe the kingdom, power, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

(*Then addressing the bridegroom and bride:*)

There are certain duties which belong to the character of husband and of wife, which we esteem it the duty of every Christian minister clearly to state, and to receive from the parties entering into this holy union, their explicit declaration, that they will discharge these duties, each to the other, before such minister is justified in joining their hands in the holy tie.

(*Then addressing the bridegroom:*)

The duties which belong to the character of a husband are, that he shall love his wife; that he will provide for her according to the rank in life in which the providence of God is pleased to place him; and that he will be faithful to her, in the character of her husband, as long as life shall last.

Husbands, love your own wives as Christ loved the church, is the command of the religion we profess. The Christian husband will feel it his duty, at all times, to hazard all that is dear to him in life, and even life itself, for the welfare of his partner.

The duty of a man to provide for the family God is pleased to give him, is according to the law of nature, of all civilized society, and according to the law of Christ. According to the law of nature; for the Author of our being has given to the husband that robust frame which enables him to discharge those active duties by which the wants of a family are provided for, and has denied this power to the female, in the delicacy of her sex. According to the law of all civilized society; for we know of no place where man is civilized, and this duty is not required of him.

I will not reason with you, sir, on the necessity of being faithful to this woman, in the character of her husband; suffice it to say, that a thought contrary to purity, in this respect, would wound your own peace; and the least appearance of evil would destroy the peace both of your partner and yourself; I will, therefore, only ask you, in the presence of God, and these his chosen witnesses, will you love this woman as your wife? Will you provide for her according to the rank in life in which the providence of God is pleased to place you, and be faithful to her in the character of her husband, as long as life shall last? I wait your answer.

(On receiving his assent, then address the bride:)

Madam, The duties which belong to the character of the wife, are, that she shall love her husband; that she shall be obedient unto him; and be faithful to him in the character of his wife, as long as life shall last. You have given evidence of your love to this man, by saying that you desire to take him to be your lawful husband; the best evidence you can give of the continuance of

your love to him, is in the discharge of the duty of obedience. This has sometimes excited the smile of the unthinking, but indeed it is of the unthinking only, for how can two walk together unless they be agreed? And when did two ever walk long together and not differ in their judgment in some matter? It is therefore for the happiness of both that it be distinctly and well understood, whose judgment shall direct where they cannot both think alike. And who is it the woman is called on to obey? The man who has pledged himself by the most sacred tie, to hazard all that is dear to him in life, and even life itself, for the welfare of his partner; he will therefore never require this obedience of her, until he has used every power of his mind to show her, that what he so requires of her is as much for her happiness as for his own. The woman should also bear in memory that it would be most unreasonable that the husband should have no control over the actions of his wife, when in many things the law makes him accountable for her conduct. She should also bear in memory that she is never, under colour of this obedience, to do aught that is contrary to the principles of morality, or the law of the land in which she lives.

I will not reason with you, madam, on the necessity of being faithful to this man in the character of his wife; suffice it to say, that a thought contrary to purity, in this respect, would wound your own peace, and the least appearance of evil would destroy the peace both of your partner and of yourself; I will, therefore, only ask you, in the presence of God, and these his chosen witnesses, will you love this man as your husband? be obedient to him in that character, and faith-

ful to him in the character of his wife, as long as life shall last? I wait your answer.

(*Assent being given, and addressing both, say:*)

You have declared your desire of entering into the holy bonds of matrimony; you have heard the duties which belong to the character of husband and of wife; you have pledged yourselves each to the other, for the discharge of these duties; (*direct the glove to be taken from the right hand of each, and then putting them each into the other, go on saying,*) I therefore unite you together, and declare you to be, no longer twain, but one, in the character of husband and of wife, in the name of God, your Creator, your Redeemer, and your Sanctifier. (*The parties keeping their hands joined, go on and say:*)

My beloved brother and sister—children of our common parent, I entreat you, by all that is dear to you in life; by all your desire of domestic happiness; and by all your dread of domestic discord, that you bear in constant memory this one, this holy truth, that you are no longer twain, but one. This is not the dictate of human wisdom; much less is it human sophistry: it is the word of the ever-living and ever-loving God; and just in proportion as you bear this truth in memory, and make it the rule of your conduct toward each other, so will you find the happiness which this institution of God, thus wisely entered into, and its duties thus faithfully discharged, will most assuredly give; and just in proportion as you do not keep this truth in memory, nor make it the rule of your conduct, so will you find that your union is unblessed.

My Brother, the woman whose hand you hold, and who is now your wife, is, next to God, your best friend; love and cherish her as such; and if ever any third party should whisper in your ear a thought contrary to her honour, however well it may have been intended, consider it as ill judged; receive it not for a moment, but reject it as the act of an enemy.

My Sister, the man whose hand you hold, and who is now your husband, is, next to God, your best friend; love and cherish him as such; and if ever any third party should whisper in your ear a thought contrary to his honour, however well it may have been intended, consider it as ill judged; receive it not for a moment, but reject it as the act of an enemy.

That you may live in all the happiness which the marriage life is so well calculated to bestow, let us lift our hearts to God, and we trust, that he will hear, and answer, and bless us.

In the sacred name of Jesus, the Lord and Saviour of the world, do we approach thy divine presence, O God our Father, who art in Heaven: We adore thee, that thou hast not only revealed thyself unto us as the Almighty Maker of heaven and of earth, but that we know thee as the Framer of our bodies, the Father of our spirits, and the Sanctifier of our souls: We bless thee that thou hast revealed thyself to us under the strong, endearing, and emphatic name of love; and that this pure and holy spirit of love hath united the hearts of thy servant and handmaid; and that they are no longer twain, but one. We pray that this holy flame may continue to burn bright and pure as long as life shall last; that they may be a blessing to each other, and to all

around them. And when thou hast served the purposes of thy grace with them here below, do thou receive them to the enjoyment of thy more immediate presence, where there is joy; where angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, with the spirits of our believing departed brethren, surround thy throne in glory, day without night rejoicing; where love, pure, ceaseless, and unbounded reigns: and unto Thee, the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God, be ascribed the kingdom, power, and glory, world without end. Amen.

An omission in the Marriage Ceremony was not perceived till the book was printed. After line 11, in page 69, the following should be introduced:

According to the law of Christ; for we there find, that, "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." He is worse than an infidel; for the infidel, not acknowledging the faith, cannot dishonour it; but the man who calls himself a Christian, and neglects the discharge of this important duty, brings a reproach upon the holy name by the which he is called.

SHORT SERMONS,

PREACHED BEFORE A SOCIETY,

FOR IMPROVING IN

CHURCH MUSIC.

SHORT SERMONS.

THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD.

The Lord is my Shepherd.—(Psalm xxiii. 1.)

Our high estimation of the Psalm from which this text is taken, and the heart-felt pleasure we have found in the contemplation of it, have induced us, once more, to bend our attention to the sacred text.

First, then, if we ask, who is this Shepherd? the Hebrew scholar will answer, by telling us, that it is Jehovah, and that it is well known, that through the Old Testament the word Lord, in capitals in our English translation, corresponds to Jehovah in the Hebrew.

The Christian world generally, and we know no exception to the rule, apply the character of shepherd in this psalm to the Lord Jesus Christ, and with great propriety; for our Lord takes this character fully to himself: (John x. 11:) "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep:" (and ver. 14.) I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine: (and ver. 16.) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must

bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of this Shepherd, says, (liii. 6.) All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. The prophet Zechariah (xiii. 7.) gives force to these sentiments, when he says, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."

Several things are observable from these divine testimonies: *First.* That this Shepherd is Jehovah. *Second.* That Christ, our Emmanuel, who is God with us, (Mat. i. 23,) claims to be the true Shepherd. *Third.* That the human nature is the sheep of God, and all stray sheep. *Fourth.* That those who know, and follow Christ, are emphatically his flock; but that those who do not thus know Christ, are to be brought into this knowledge, and thus the whole human race be one flock; Christ the head and Shepherd of them all.

The next thing we notice in our text is the confidence with which the psalmist expresses himself; there is nothing like hesitation or doubt, but rather of present enjoyment, and the assurance of future good. The whole residue of the psalm is the exhibition of results flowing from the fact, and the knowledge of the fact, that Jesus is the great, the true, the only divine Shepherd. But it will, perhaps, be said, that this was the privilege of David only. Such thought is a fatal error; it is surely the privilege of every one who has David's faith; and if we have his faith, and have not his enjoyment, then we live just so far beneath our privilege.

The first advantage we derive is security against poverty: "The LORD is my Shepherd, *I shall not want.*" And it is most reasonable for us to expect, that since Jehovah has taken upon him the character of our Shepherd, he will discharge to each of his flock this first and most important duty; but let us not suppose, that he will supply what we, in our weak, perverted judgment, desire, but what he, in his unerring mind, sees is good. And does not our own calm, deliberate judgment approve of this? We prefer the judgment of our physician to our own; and even in the meanest arts we have respect to the judgment of the artist; shall we not then prefer the will of God to any thing that our fallible wisdom would desire? Jesus has set us the divine example: not my will, but thine be done. And when our will is thus absorbed in the will of God, we know that what we have is what is best for us, and we receive what we ask for, because we ask in that humble faith, which prefers the will of God to our own, and thus the will of God is ours, even to the endurance of the sorest ills of life. We willingly submit to the will of the earthly physician, when he makes us sick, that he may the more effectually make us well; so the good Physician, whose recipe never fails, says, (Rev. iii. 19,) "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." Thus, then, what we feel as suffering, we know to be a blessing under the form of evil. This satisfied state is well represented to us in the second verse: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;" or, as it is rendered in the margin, pastures of tender grass. Does the sheep ever lie down till it is satisfied with food? Would it lie down in the pasture of tender grass if it had not fed to the full? Such is the satisfaction of those who know Christ, and

follow him; he is to them all that they desire: their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

This divine Shepherd is represented as leading his flock beside the still waters, or waters of quietness. This is in accordance with the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. (Phil. iv. 7.)

The next blessing enjoyed by the psalmist is the *restoration*, or *conversion*, of the soul; these are nearly, if not quite, synonymous terms. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost: he hath finished his work, and, consequently, restored. (Ps. xix. 7.) We are told, the law, *or doctrine*, of the LORD, or *Jehovah*, is perfect, converting, *or restoring* the soul: the testimony of the LORD, or Jehovah, is sure, making wise the simple. How precious is the wisdom of him who is taught of God, to see the way and the extent of salvation, the value of the blood which was shed for every man, (Heb. ii. 9,) and which cleanseth from all sin. (1 John i. 7.) Jesus, our Shepherd, is our guide, "he leadeth me in paths of righteousness, for his name's sake." We not only acknowledge, but maintain the moral tendency of the grace of God; for it teacheth us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, and thus ornaments the profession of faith which we make. (1 Peter iii. 4. Titus ii. 12. iii. 8.) But as respects our salvation, and its meritorious cause, it is the righteousness of Christ; his righteousness being made ours by imputation, we are led into the knowledge of his righteous incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession. All this he did and suffered for us; and the same divine love, which offered prayer for his murderers while hanging on the cross, is now

employed as our advocate with God; and all this for *his* name's sake. And why for his *name's* sake? When we consider what is the import of his name; that Jesus imports Saviour, and was given because he should save *his* people from their sins, is it not for the honour of his name, as Saviour, that his people (and all souls are his) should then be led in the paths of righteousness?

The next advantage we have is in the knowledge of the victory we have over death, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. xv. 57.) "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." There is a natural attachment to life, which the Author of our being has fixed in us for wise and good purposes, and this may appear to imply the fear of death, or, rather, of dying; but the believer who is weak in faith, may be subject to fear of bodily pain in dying, when he has no fear of being dead, or of future spiritual death; and such in their last moments are usually raised above all fear of physical suffering. The usual recitation of this passage is "the *dark* valley." There is a beautiful correction of this error in the tract called the Dairyman's Daughter. Listen to the conversation between the clergyman and the dying saint, as represented by L. Richmond: "At length I said to Elizabeth, Do you experience any doubts or temptations on the subject of your eternal safety?"

"No, sir; the Lord deals very gently with me, and gives me peace."

"What are your views of the dark valley of death, now that you are passing through it?"

"It is *not* dark."

"Why so?"

"My Lord is *there*, and he is my light, and my salvation."

"Have you any fears of more bodily sufferings?

"The Lord deals so gently with me; I can trust him."

"Something of a convulsion came on. When it was past, she said, again and again, The Lord deals very gently with me. Lord, I am thine—save me—blessed Jesus—precious Saviour—His blood cleanseth from all sin—who shall separate?—His name is wonderful—thanks be to God—he giveth us the victory—I, even I, am saved.—O, grace, mercy, and wonder—Lord, receive my spirit!—Dear sir—dear father, mother, friends, I am going—but all is well, well, well. She relapsed again. We knelt down to prayer. The Lord was in the midst of us, and blessed us.

"She did not again revive while I remained, nor ever speak any more words which could be understood. She slumbered for about ten hours, and at last sweetly fell asleep in the arms of that Lord who had dealt so gently with her.

"I left the house an hour after she had ceased to speak. I pressed her hand as I was taking leave, and said, 'Christ is the resurrection and the life.' She gently returned the pressure, but could neither open her eyes, nor utter a reply.

"I never had witnessed a scene so impressive as this before. It completely filled my imagination, as I returned home.

"Farewell, thought I, dear friend, till the morning of an eternal day shall renew our personal intercourse.

"Thou wast a brand plucked from the burning, that thou mightest become a star shining in the firmament of glory. I have seen thy light and thy good works, and will therefore glorify our Father which is in heaven. I have seen, in thy example, what it is to be a sinner freely saved by grace. I have learned from thee, as in a living mirror, *who* it is that begins, continues, and ends the work of faith and love. Jesus is all in all: he will and shall be glorified. He won the crown, and alone deserves to wear it. May no one attempt to rob him of his glory! He saves, and saves to the uttermost. Farewell, dear sister in the Lord. Thy flesh and thy heart may fail; but God is the strength of thy heart, and shall be thy portion for ever."

In the death of the dairyman's daughter, we see the power of faith, overcoming the fear of death, even in the bosom of a timid female. The psalmist gives the true reason of this power, viz: a sense of the presence of God; "for thou art with me." How strange that men should ever be afraid of that power, which alone can give a victory over death. The sense of the divine presence, knowing his character, gives joy; and this is the reason assigned in the text. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The rod is the emblem of power, and the staff is the crosier staff of the Shepherd with which he draws the wanderer into the flock, and is emblematic of his love; but we may be asked, if there is such victory over death, what comfort can be necessary to the believer? We answer, that our faith as Christians does not destroy the innocent sympathies of nature, and that being under their influence, the knowledge

of the power and love of God is the source of support and comfort.

Our Shepherd takes care that we shall not want, by verse 5: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Is not this table the communion table of our Lord? the feast of fat things spoken of by Isaiah, (xxv. 6,) of wines on the lees well refined, and this made by the Lord of hosts unto all people? Do we not here spiritually eat the flesh which is meat indeed, and receive the blood which is drink indeed? In what sense is this in the presence of my enemies? Our sins are our greatest foes, but here is the atoning sacrifice made for the remission of sins. It was on festive occasions that the head was anointed; and the cup of the Christian runs over with joy when he considers that he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things; (Rom. viii. 32;) and can the unchangeable God, who thus freely gives, take away any thing that would have been good to have continued longer with us? Surely, no! Men talk of the feast of reason, and the flow of soul; but here is the feast of divine wisdom, and the flow of the love which God alone can show, inasmuch as while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us.

The psalmist's confidence in the good Shepherd is expressed in the last verse of this psalm. (v. 6.) "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." The goodness of God is manifested by his unremitting supply of all our wants; and his

mercy, (which is the relief of the miserable,) by making the evil, as well as the good, work together for our good and his glory. But where is the house of him of whom heaven is but his throne, and the earth his footstool; (Is. lxvi. 1;) yet he whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, (1 Kings viii. 27,) condescends to permit a house to be built to his name, and he claims it as his own; and under the Christian dispensation, where two or three are met together in the name of Jesus, there is the presence of God the Saviour; and though there be no earthly building or enclosure, is not the place the house of God? Jacob, after his night vision, called the place the house of God, the gate of heaven; and, dedicating the place which had been called Luz, gave it a new name, called it Bethel, a name signifying the House of God. How true is it that "where thou (God) art is heaven." The most spiritual understanding of dwelling in the house of the Lord is to live in the light of his countenance, the joys of his salvation. This enjoyment is said to be "for ever;" and the tempter may say, is not this for ever length of days merely? Jesus gives us the answer: Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. (John xiv. 1—4.)

PEACE BY CHRIST.

It pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell. And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.—(Col. i. 19, 20.)

While some men represent the Supreme Being as having settled the endless misery of some, the endless felicity of others, irrespective of the merits or demerits of the one or the other, but every human being included in the bliss or misery, there are others who represent the Almighty as leaving every man to become the framer of his own future state, whether of boundless bliss or misery.

We object to both these schemes. The first is altogether unlike him whose ways are equal; and no man can have the assurance of the understanding, whether he is bound for bliss or misery; he may vacillate between hope and fear, but certainty, we think, he never can arrive at. The latter scheme is quite as objectionable, for it represents the Maker of mankind as having so little interest in the fate of the being whom he had made, that by possibility, every man taking the unwise

course, the effect might be that not one of the children of men would ever arrive at felicity.

The first is the philosophic doctrine of fate, the last the doctrine of free will; neither of them supported by Scripture, but both of them corrupting the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. How happy, then, is it for us, that we have the pure word of God before us, and the perfect liberty of searching to know what is the will of God concerning us, and that when we have found it, we may rejoice together in it, for it is good, only good, and good continually.

We think it will be acknowledged by all, that the salvation of the soul is the subject of the text; and we think, that the first sentiment expressed here, indicates the interest which God takes in our happiness. "It pleased the Father;" it was not a matter of indifference but of interest. It pleased the Father that in Jesus, the Son of God, all fulness should dwell. Now let it be carefully remembered, that the fulness of any thing is all that it can contain; and if we are asked, what is the quality of that fulness, we answer, the divine and human nature. For proof of the divinity of Christ, we have before us the assurance (Col. ii. 9.) that, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" and we may be permitted here to ask, what can be correctly attributed to Deity, that is not in the fulness of the Godhead? The language is yet stronger: it is *all* the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and why bodily, if not to show the Union of the human and divine nature, in the person of the Redeemer? This doctrine of union, is also seen in the connexion between Christ and his redeemed. Christ is the head of every man; (1 Cor. xi. 3;) we

are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; (Eph. v. 30;) we are complete in him. (Col ii. 10.)

The next subject which our text presents, is the peace which is made for us by our Redeemer; the text reads, "having made," in the past tense; the margin reads "making peace," implying a progressive work. They are both true, and we will look at this subject in both ways.

First, as a finished salvation. "Having made peace." We find the Saviour, in the near prospect of his suffering, offering up a divine prayer, in which he says: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; (John xvii. 4;) and when hanging on the cross, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, I thirst, received the vinegar, said, It is finished, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (John xix. 28, 29.) A beautiful view of the will of God respecting us, and of this being a finished salvation, is given in the epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle says: "By the which will, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." (Heb. x. 10.)

Second, as a progressive salvation. "Making peace." The finished salvation is the groundwork of the progressive; it is in perfect accordance with, if it be not the very essence of the Gospel. The distinguished apostle to the Gentiles, says, we preach Christ crucified; (1 Cor. i. 23;) and wherever this crucified Saviour was believed in, there was peace, for, "we which have believed, do enter into rest." (Heb. iv. 3.) This preaching of the Gospel of the cross, is the progressive work, the "making of peace;" and this work shall go on, till the Jew shall be brought in with the fulness of

the Gentiles. (Rom. xi. 25.) It may be asked, how can he who is at enmity against God be considered as having his peace made with God? We answer; his unbelief is the cause of his enmity; he knows not the peace which God hath *made* by the blood of the cross; but rather thinks God his enemy, and would rather destroy than be destroyed.

This subject may be illustrated by the supposition of a case which, in its leading features, has taken place in our own day. Two distant nations are at war; but war cannot last for ever, and at length peace is made. Some portion of the fleets and armies of the belligerents are far distant from the scene of negotiation, and do not know of peace; they think of nothing but what each thinks his duty to take, sink, burn, and destroy; they are engaged in the dreadful conflict, each thinking it his duty by all means to seek the destruction of the other; but while the work of death is thus going terribly on, a flag is seen in the distance, the angel of peace appears, and the arm that was lifted to give the blow of death, falls harmless, and the hand which he thought to imbrue in the blood of his fellow, and for which he hoped to obtain the shout of applause and the crown of the victor, is now reached out to bind up the wound it had itself inflicted; and each is desirous of showing to the other, by the reciprocity of good offices, that though enemies in war, they are in peace friends. But the peace was made while they were at war; the moment the treaty was signed, there was national peace and friendship; the nations of these contending parties were at peace while they were in the conflict of battle; nay, they were themselves included in the nation's peace, while they

were personally engaged seeking each other's death. How strange, that what but a moment before was an act of heroism, to be honoured and rewarded, would now be considered murder, and not to be atoned for, but by the death of the offender! And how is this peace, so great and so sudden, made? The answer is easy, it is simply by faith; these opponents had the message of a finished peace placed before them; they knew the authority by which it was made; they knew the messengers who brought the good news; they had the conviction of the understanding, that their nations were at peace, while they themselves were at war; and that their conflict was continued by their ignorance, and that their present enjoyment of peace and rest, is the consequence of that peace which was made while they were thus engaged in war.

The Christian has also believed, and thus entered into rest. The next subject presented to us, is the means by which this peace was made, and that is, "through the blood of his cross." To the mind that does not receive the Scripture as the authority of God, difficulties may appear; but to us who have no doubt but that God speaks to us through the apostle, it is enough when we have, thus saith the Lord. The consideration that this is the way which the wisdom of God was pleased to appoint, gives us the perfect assurance that it is the way most likely of all others to effect its desired object; nay, because he cannot be mistaken, it must and will effect its purpose; the offering of Christ once for all, is the continual theme of prophecy, and the burden of the song with the apostles; they know no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be

saved; (Acts iv. 12;) but the minute operation of this cause, to produce this effect, is what we do not pretend to know, nor are we bound to answer; but we are bound to believe God on his Word; and he has said, that the peace is made, and made by this blood.

And yet there is a fact, known to every Christian who is not merely nominally so, that has some tendency to throw light on the influence of the death of Christ. The man who believes that the death of Christ was necessary to his salvation, that the sin of man created this necessity, and that he is himself a sinner; when his mind looks to Calvary, he sees the Son of God, humbling himself to the shameful and painful death of the cross, and feels that all this is endured for him, his heart exclaims, "my Lord and my God;" and, knowing that God freely gave up his Son for us all, he sees the reasonableness of the apostolic conclusion, that with him God freely gives us all things; (Rom. viii. 32;) and in conformity with the same spirit, he knows the power which gives all, and gives freely, will never take away aught that would have been good longer to enjoy. Is this man reconciled to God? His understanding tells him he has cause only for gratitude and praise; and instead of his being simply reconciled to God, his wonder is, can the God of infinite moral purity be reconciled to him? Thus the subject of reconciliation is brought before us, and the question may be asked with earnest honesty: will God in very deed be reconciled to such a polluted sinful creature as man is? If by this is meant, will God be reconciled to the sin of man, we answer, it is impossible, for he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. (Hab. i. 13.)

He is the sinner's friend, but the enemy of sin. Were God the friend of sin, he would be the enemy of man; for sin is the destroyer of the happiness of man. All sin is the work of the devil, and for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John iii. 8.) Who then can suppose that the pure God will be reconciled to sin? Who, but a madman ever advocated such a sentiment? Far be it from us.

The reconciliation spoken of in our text, is not that of God to sin, a thing impossible, nor even of God to man, at least so far as that it might imply that he ever was the enemy of man; no, it is the reconciliation of man to God; of man, the offender, seeking death in the error of his ways, to God, the giver and sustainer of life, and God himself the reconciler. Well may it be said of him, that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways and thoughts higher than ours. (Is. lv. 9.) This reconciliation is the same as the celebrated doctrine of atonement. To atone is derived from *at one*, as the etymologists remark, *to be at one*, is the same as *to be in concord*; *to* reconcile, is to make to like again—to make to be liked again—to make any thing consistent—to restore to favour.* Where is the difference, if any, between reconciliation and atonement?

We will now inquire, what is the extent of this reconciliation, or atonement? and we think we are perfectly safe in saying it is for all mankind; first, because all mankind stand in need of it; second, because no man is excluded from it in the text; third, because it is

* Johnson.

asserted in the text, that God, by Christ, will reconcile all things to himself.

We may, perhaps, be told, that all does not necessarily mean every one. We know this; but we beg that it may be considered, that it is the efficacy of the atonement, by the sacrifice of Christ, that is the subject of our text. And when we find God spoken of as the Saviour of all men, as well as specially of them that believe; (1 Tim. iv. 10;) when we see Jesus, by the grace of God, tasting death for every man, (Heb. ii. 9,) these two quotations, though taken from different parts, are not in opposition, but in concord; both refer to the great sacrifice alluded to in our text; and if both are in concord, then is God the Saviour of all and every man; and a stronger mode of expression we can hardly conceive, to express the whole, without the exception of any, than all and every. Our understanding of the extent of the reconciliation is supported by the manner our text closes; thus, "By him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." What are we to understand by things in heaven? is it not the spirits of just, or justified men made perfect?* (Heb. xii. 23.) And what by things on earth but those who are yet in the body, and need the application, by faith, of that blood which cleanseth from all sin? We have examined our text somewhat minutely, though briefly, and what is the result?

First. That God takes pleasure in the salvation of man; that it is not a matter of indifference with him.

Second. That man is not so free, that he can ultimately prevent God from accomplishing his gracious

* Doddridge.

purpose; nor so bound, but that he is reasonably accountable to God for his actions.

Third. That there is a finished and a progressive salvation: the first, by the death of Christ; for we utterly disclaim every way that would impair this, all the philosophy of men that would tend to make unnecessary this only way which God hath appointed, and all that negative divinity that rests in the rejection of error, instead of the belief of the truth. And we see the progressive salvation, in the spread of the Gospel, and the peace and joy of the believer.

Fourth. The divine assurance, that God is the Saviour of all and every man.

How delightfully will this work of God be accomplished before our admiring eyes, when the vision of John shall be perfected, "and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. (Rev. v. 13.)

When the creation is restor'd,
And God shall be by all ador'd,
How loudly will the triumph swell,
Our Jesus hath done all things well!

Sin, death, and hell, will Christ destroy,
And fill the universe with joy;
His love shall then each voice compel
To cry, "He hath done all things well."

All creatures then as one shall join,
To shout aloud his praise divine!
(As sacred prophecies foretell,)
And say, "He hath done all things well."

THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

We ought not to be surprised, that men are now so slow to believe the truths of the Gospel; for the apostles themselves, who had been eye and ear witnesses of the heavenly wisdom and almighty power of their divine Master, did not readily believe the fact of his resurrection. Listen to the language of our Lord on this subject; mark how plain it is, and how difficult it is to understand it in any other way than according to its literal import, and its literal fulfilment. (Mark xvi. 14.)

Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall arise again. (Mat. xx. 17, 18, 19.) If we are asked, what could possibly be the reason, why it was, that with such plain assurance from their Lord, of his death and resurrection, they did

not believe the report of those that had seen him after he was risen? We answer, their conceptions of the Messiah's character were so sensual, that even at the time when our Lord was instituting the observance of the supper, in memory of himself, and his atoning sacrifice, there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. (Luke xxii. 24.) Nor even after his resurrection, when they were convinced of the fact by ocular demonstration and personal intercourse, were they entirely free from this spirit; for we find them, even then, asking him, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (Acts i. 6.)

Was not the restoration which they then looked for, a freedom from the Roman yoke, and the establishment of national independence? It was only after the place of Judas was filled by the election of Matthias, and the gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, that this delusion was entirely done away, and all things brought to their remembrance, according to the promise of the Saviour, (John xiv. 26,) and the first apostolic sermon preached by the zealous Peter.

What a lesson of humility does this picture of the apostles teach us! What are we better than they were before they received knowledge and power from on high? Are not we sensual? Do not the things of time and sense occupy too much of our attention, and divert us from one thing needful above all others, even the knowledge of our God and his Christ, in the knowledge of whom is found the enjoyment of eternal life? (John xvii. 3.) If conscience is permitted to act, we will lay our hands on our mouths, and our mouths in the dust, and with humility listen to what God the Lord hath to say.

concerning us. It is remarkable, that the verse immediately preceding our text tells us, that our Lord appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. This hardness of heart in the apostles proves, that God does not choose his messengers for their excellence, but that he will send by whom he will. (Ex. iv. 13.) And does it not raise in our minds the inquiry, whether this hardness of heart did not blind the understanding, and whether the blindness of the mind does not tend to increase the hardness of the heart? O, then, let us ask of God, that we might see him as he is; and that we might see ourselves as we are seen of him.

With this humble fear, and pious desire, let us approach to the words of our text.

The language of our text is imperative—go. And where the direct appointment, or the providence of God, makes it a duty, man must not hesitate. Such was the sentiment of Paul, when he said, though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me, yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel. (1 Cor. ix. 16.) This text appears to be the commission of the apostles; and the missionary zeal of the present day appears to accord with the extent of the field of action, stated in the text, "all the world," and "every creature." What language could be used that would more perfectly include the whole, without the exception of any, than all and every? Is it not reasonable for us to conclude, that he who sent the message considered those to whom he sent it as interested in it;

and that they should be ultimately led into the enjoyment of the blessings it contains? if not, why send it to them? And when we observe, that it is to be preached, or proclaimed, we are sure it is of no private interpretation; and the publicity thus required to be given to it, is an evidence that it fears not, but invites investigation. How different from the mysteries of the heathen, where the few only were initiated, and the multitude obliged to bow to their sovereign dictate! Here it is required that every creature be instructed.

If we inquire, what is this Gospel, that is of so extensive interest, that every creature is interested in it? We shall probably be told that it is good news, that the word means this: and we receive this interpretation with pleasure. If we inquire further, what is the news? we may be answered, that it is found in the language of the angel to the shepherds, that it is "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke ii. 10, 11.) Our hope of the nature, extent, and accomplishment of this divine communication, is strengthened by the heavenly glory which accompanied and followed its delivery; for the glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds; (ver. 9;) and as soon as the angel had delivered his message "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (ver. 13, 14.)

We have seen that the Gospel communicated by the angel to the shepherds, was the birth of the "Saviour, who is Christ the Lord:" and it is our duty to inquire

into the import of this divine character. And first, we think, it is a perfect absurdity to think of a Saviour where there is no impending evil, which (without the interference of that Saviour) we would have been subjected to; we, therefore, reject all the miscalled divinity, which does not receive this Saviour as the ground of hope. And if we are told that he is our Saviour by precept and example, though we acknowledge an inexpressible value in each of these, while we are willing to say that he was wisdom and virtue personified, we are not willing to say that by our imitation of these, we can blot out our sins; much less are we able to purchase, by such imitation, a title to the endless joys of heaven.

This Jesus the Saviour, is *Christ* the Lord, and we think it our duty to inquire into the character of the Saviour as *Christ*. The word signifies *anointed*, and is borrowed from the Jewish economy, under which their priests and kings were anointed with a holy anointing oil, prepared by the command of God; and they were thus inducted into the offices they were to sustain: the prophets of God were anointed with the Spirit of God. Professing Christians, of various and opposing sentiments, have so generally agreed to acknowledge Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King, that we do not consider it necessary to prove the fact; but rather to inquire what we are to understand by the application of these words to Christ. And first, we take leave to observe, that we consider the word as the official name of the Saviour, and that it is by his being the Christ of God, that he is the Saviour of the world; in other words, by

his being Prophet, Priest, and King. Let us then consider Christ as a Prophet.

Those who, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, foretell events to come, are acknowledged as prophets; but this does not prevent them from discharging other and very important duties. They are instructers, and that public instructers. Instructers in religion were called prophets, we find from the first epistle to the Corinthians, which desires that they would follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. (xiv. 1.) And he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. (ver. 3.) And, still continuing the subject of the superiority of the prophesying over the gift of tongues, Paul says, I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. (ver. 18, 19.) Christ, as a prophet, whether he foretells events, or gives moral or prudential instruction, is superior to all who went before him. In foretelling the sacrifice of himself, his resurrection from the dead, the perils and sufferings of his followers, the destruction of Jerusalem, and his second advent in glory, who is like him? Moses, compared with him, is but a servant in the house of God, while he is represented as the Son. (Heb. iii. 5, 6.) And he is greater than Solomon in all the glory of his wisdom. (Mat. xii. 42.) Christ, as a prophet, not only foretold the most astonishing events, which we know to have been fulfilled in part, and, therefore, reasonably look for the fulfilment of the remainder; but, as an instructer in morals

and theology, who is like unto him? In morals, he has obtained the praise, even of the deistical philosopher; and in theology, it is his spirit, speaking in his sent servants, that gives value to their teaching.

As a teacher of morals, he stripped the pure law of God of the false glosses by which the Jewish rabbis had obscured and made it void. His teaching required purity in the inward parts, that to look with unlawful desire, was to commit the offence in the heart. (Mat. v. 28.) He proved to the Pharisees, that by their tradition they had made the commandment of God of none effect. (Mat. xv. 6.) Our Lord's first public appearance gave promise of his future greatness; for when he was but twelve years of age, he, being with his parents at Jerusalem, was separated from them; and when they found him, it was in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions: and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. (Luke ii. 46, 47.) And after he had entered on his public ministry, being at Capernaum, on the Sabbath day, he entered into the synagogue and taught: and they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. (Mark i. 22.) And on another occasion we find him in the temple teaching; and the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, having never learned! (John vii. 14, 15.) The people at length began to acknowledge the evidences that Jesus was the Christ; and many of them said, "when Christ cometh will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning

him : and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. They went on their unholy errand ; but no doubt they were convinced by the divine wisdom of Jesus, for they returned to those who sent them ; and, being asked, " Why have ye not brought him ?" they answered, Never man spake like this man. (John vii. 31, 32. 45, 46.)

Of the theology which Jesus, as the prophet of God, taught, we shall at present notice but one principle ; and to the untaught, certainly, a very strange one ; that is, that he was himself the bread of life, that came down from heaven ; that he would give this bread (his flesh) for the life of the world ; and when the Jews wondered how this could be, he said, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in ye. Nor was it the unbeliever, or hesitating follower, to whom this was a difficulty ; but many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, this is a hard saying, who can hear it ? Nor does the condescension of our Lord, in showing them that what he had said was to be spiritually understood, remove the difficulty, for we are informed that from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (John vi. 32—66.) And, indeed, we do not see any way in which the difficulty can now be removed, but by faith in the efficacy of that atonement which Christ did make, when, on Calvary, he gave his flesh for the life of the world.

We have said that the prophets of God were anointed with the Spirit of God, and we will close this part of our subject by an inquiry how far this rule will apply to the Saviour of men. The prophet Isaiah says : the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath

anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Our Lord, being in Nazareth, on the Sabbath day, went into the synagogue and stood up to read. The book of Isaiah was handed to him he read; the passage we have quoted, and immediately applied to himself, saying, "this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." And all bear witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. (Luke iv. 16—22.) Thus do we find him claiming for himself the character of Christ, Anointed, or Messiah. The same prophet, Isaiah, again speaking of him, says: "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord." (Is. xi. 2.) These are the glories of the Spirit which rested on him; but one thing remains on this subject to inquire into; and that is, in what degree had he the anointing Spirit of God? John the Baptist, drawing a contrast between himself and Christ, says of him: "he that cometh from heaven, is above all: he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John iii. 31—34.) What is without measure, must be infinite, and what Spirit is infinite but the Holy Ghost! Had Jesus the Holy Spirit without measure? He had! Then all the prophets of God, who ever appeared on earth, were but as streams from the infinite fountain; Jesus is himself

the boundless ocean. This may to some appear strange; but it accords well with the fact, that in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily. (Col. ii. 9.)

We defer what remains till our next meeting.

THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

(CONTINUED.)

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.—(Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

In our former consideration of the subject before us, we found that Jesus becomes our Saviour, by assuming the distinctive characters of Prophet, Priest, and King. We have seen him as the divine instructer; let us now behold him in the equally important character of the "High Priest of our profession." If we receive the Scriptures as the word of God, there can be no doubt of his sustaining this character; for it is distinctly given to him by the apostle to the Gentiles. (Heb. iii. 1.) Much might here be said of the privileges and duties of the priest under the Mosaic economy; we pass over them, to the all important doctrine of the annual atonement made for all the sins of all the people. To some, it may appear that our view of the extent of the atonement is too large; then hear the Scripture speaking of the priest. "He shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary; and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar; and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the

people of the congregation: and this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. (Lev. xvi. 33, 34.)

The ornaments on the official garments of the priest, appear to us indicative of the above sentiment; for on his heart he wore a breastplate of twelve precious stones, each having the name of one of the tribes of Israel engraven on it; on his shoulders, he wore two onyx stones, each having the names of six of the tribes of Israel engraven on it, the whole set in gold, and ornamented with the richest embroidery; on the head he wore a mitre, and in its front a plate of pure gold, and engraven with the sacred words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. (Ex. xxiii.) The whole of his garments corresponded, for they were made for glory, and for beauty. And was it only to attract the gaze of an unthinking multitude, that all this beauty and glory was displayed? A holier purpose must be ascribed to God. The high priest was but a type of Christ; and surely we may, without being justly chargeable with enthusiasm, consider these ornaments as intimating the divine virtues of our Lord and Master. By the omnipotence of his power, he bears the people, all his people, into the holiest of all. The breastplate worn on his heart, had the names of all the tribes engraven there; for the head was reserved holiness to the Lord; yet, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Cor. xii. 26.) The honour is conferred on all by union with the head. Let us not think that these blessings are for a favourite people only. Is our God the God of the Jews only? Is he

not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. (Rom. iii. 29.) The middle wall of partition is broken down. (Eph. ii. 14.) Let not those who think themselves emphatically united to Christ by faith, look down on those who yet have not their hope; rather let them look within, and know that their best performances require the blood of atonement; for it was enjoined on Aaron to wear this motto, that he might bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. (Ex. xxviii. 38.) How pure and holy is God; how impure are we, even in our best estate on earth, and in our best performances. From the epistle to the Hebrews, we learn the great and glorious character of Christ as our High Priest. There we are told, that "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (ii. 17.) Again, we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. (iv. 14.) Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest, but he that said unto him, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (v. 5, 6.) Called of God a High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec. (v. 10.) Melchisedec has been called a type of Christ, because he was both king and priest;* without father, without mother; or, as it is rendered in the margin, without pedigree. (vii. 3.) Scripture tells us nothing of his father, or of his mother, or of his

* Eng. Annotations, Heb. vii. 1.

genealogy, or of his birth, or of his death; and in this sense he was a figure of Jesus Christ, who is a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec, and not according to the order of Aaron, whose origin, life, and death, are known.* The same epistle, teaching us the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ over all Jewish sacrifices, tells us that he, being become a High Priest, by his ownblood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. (ix. 12, 13.) And again, Christ is entered into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us; (ix. 24;) in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (ix. 26.) By the will of God we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (x. 10.) We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for (or by) the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. (ii. 9.) Who, that has seen the wisdom of Christ as our Prophet, offering lessons of divine truth, and now beholds him giving himself a sacrifice for the sin of the world, can for a moment think of saying, we will not have this man to reign over us? (Luke xix. 14.) We would rather suppose that, overcome by his wisdom and his love, they would fall down, worship, and adore.

We are now to consider our blessed Lord in the character of King. The Scripture gives abundant testimony that he is King. When he was about to make his public entry into Jerusalem, he gave instruction to two of his disciples relative to it; and we are told that all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was

* Taylor's Calmet, art. M.

spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass. (Mat. xxi. 4, 5.) Isaiah says, Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work (or recompense) before him. (Is. lxii. 11.) Zechariah says, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. (Zech. ix. 9.) Our Lord not only claims to be a King, but to have kingdoms at his command; for, at the institution of the supper, he says to his disciples, I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke xxii. 29, 30.) When interrogated by Pilate, Art thou the king of the Jews? he answered, my kingdom is not of this world; else would my servants fight. And again: Art thou a king? he answers, Thou sayest that I am a king. (John xviii. 33—37.) When suffering on the cross, one of those who suffered with him even then recognised him as a king, by saying, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. (Luke xxii. 42, 43.) In the book of Revelation we are told of those who would make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings. (Rev. xvii. 14.) We close our quotations on this subject with the following from the

same book: John saw heaven opened, and observed one with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God; and he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev. xix. 11. 13. 16.)

Now, what think ye of Christ? Who will venture to say, we will not have this man to reign over us? (Luke xix. 14.) Shall the *wisdom of God*, speaking through him, be heard in vain? Shall he bid us learn of him, (Mat. xi. 29,) and we refuse him as a teacher? Shall the *love of God* be placed before you in the dying Saviour, and will ye turn away from the sight? Heard ye not his fervent, final prayer for his murderers, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do? (Luke xxiii. 34.) This prayer was for you and me, and was not in vain. By the *omnipotent power of God*, which dwelt in him, he who was delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) Shall the attributes of God be all exercised for us; the wisdom, the love, and the power of God, be all manifested to us, and for us, for our happiness, for our salvation, and we yet remain lukewarm? Forbid it, gratitude—forbid it, God! Man may, in his willing ignorance, despise the divine wisdom; in the indulgence of his evil passions, his heart may be so hardened, as to be insensible even to the love of God; and in the madness of his folly, he may so abuse the powers which God hath given him, as to bring his whole force against the Author of his being. But, blessed be God, man is not omnipotent, and God is almighty; the less must be overcome of the greater; God will not be foiled in the end which he had in view in our creation; nor the

Saviour disappointed of the joy which was set before him, and for which he endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. xii. 2.) The heathen shall be his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth his possession. (Ps. ii. 8.) Is there a lingering doubt in the mind of any, whether he will be for God, or for the enemy of God and man? Let such a one remember, that, strictly speaking, there can be no neutrality in this case; for this apparent indifference operates as the act of an enemy; its natural tendency is to make others indifferent; and, certainly, to continue the indifference of those who are already in that state, a state so unwise, a state so offensive to God, that he says, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth; as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent. (Rev. iii. 16. 19.) How unwise is it in men to be indifferent on a subject of so much importance; it is as much more important to us as heaven is better than earth, as a never-ending duration is greater than this span of passing life. It is not only required of us that we should not be indifferent, but that we should be zealous; and if our zeal is in any degree proportionate to the object in view, it never can be too great; nor need we fear that it will degenerate into fanaticism, while it is directed by our understanding—while we have, thus saith the Lord, for what we say or do.

Perhaps this may be considered as departing from the main object of our text; and possibly it may in some degree, yet it is connected with it, in so much as the grace of God has been turned into lasciviousness, by

men who crept into the church, committing this great evil, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4.) And may not that which has been, appear again? May it not appear even among us? We think it may, and we will tell you how. A mind, fixed only on the end, the final happiness of all men, but forgetful of him who is the way, and the truth, and the life, (John xiv. 6,) is he not looking for the end without the means? And such a one, if he gets into the heat of controversy, is he not under the temptation to deny the necessity of a Saviour? And have we not heard of some falling under the temptation, reviling the doctrine of the atonement, the necessity of the blood of Christ, and ending in atheism, denying the Lord God? May we use the language of Paul, and say, I write not these things to shame you, but, as my beloved sons, I warn you. (1 Cor. iv. 14.)

O keep close to the side of the bleeding Saviour; let all your hope rest on him; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

We have seen the glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, in the knowledge of Christ, as Prophet, Priest, and King; let us now take another, but not contradictory, view of our subject; the Gospel.

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, writing to the Galatians, says, the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. Now, to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of

many, but as of one; and to thy seed, which is Christ. (Gal. iii. 8. 16.)

Let us look at the promise to which the apostle alludes. When God was pleased to call Abraham to get out of his country, and from his kindred, and his father's house, to a land that he would show him; it was accompanied with a promise, that of him should be made a great nation, that he should be blessed, and his name great, and that he should be a blessing. It closes with these words, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. xii. 3.) Was not this blessing the reward of his faith and obedience? He manifests his faith by his obedience, in leaving his country, his kindred, and his father's house, at the command of God. Let us imitate his example, and when duty calls, may no earthly consideration prevent us from rendering to God a willing obedience. But who is he who curseth Abraham? The Jew almost adored him, and thought himself entitled to great favour, because descended from him; the Christian blesses him, Mahomet does him honour, and we do not know that even the idolater hates him. We observe that the party blessing is named in the plural, while the party cursing is in the singular. Who is this but the grand enemy of all righteousness, whether of faith or practice; who deceived our mother Eve, teaching her to believe him, rather than God, and soon found her his willing and obedient subject. Let the principle of faith, or confidence in God, only be shaken, and disobedience to him will soon be found to be the necessary result.

The next Scripture which has relation to the subject

of the Gospel, as taught by the apostle, is when God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorah. He says, shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? (Gen. xviii. 17, 18.)

What nearness of union and communion with God! What blessedness in having God for our visitant! And why may we not? Abraham had no greater reason to believe and trust in God than we have. Let us then live near to God, by a realizing sense of his presence; and the God of Abraham will come to us and bless us.

(We will continue our subject at our next meeting.)

THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

(CONTINUED.)

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.—(Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

At the close of our last meeting, we were considering the Gospel as taught by Paul, writing to the Galatians; (Gal. iii. 8. 16;) and referring to the Scriptures which support his view of the subject. Let us proceed. The next in order is, when Abraham is called to sacrifice his son Isaac. And here we cannot but pause and think, how strange! how mysterious! that the great and good God, who hath fixed in every parent so strong an attachment to its offspring, should command a father to be the murderer of his child! It cannot be! My duty is to nourish, and cherish my child, not to destroy him. The very beast of prey protects its young; how then can I be called to destroy my son? That very son, in whom he has but just now told me, the promised seed should be called; and thus, by his own command, destroy the natural means by which his own promise should be accomplished? It cannot be; reason and nature revolt at the idea. Such would have been the plausible reasoning of ordinary men. Abraham had held com-

munion with God; he knew the voice of God; and, whatever difficulty there might be, for human wisdom to reconcile the promise and the command, what man could not do, might be easy with God. His duty was to obey. He took two young men, and with them his only son, whom he loved, and set out early in the morning to discharge this dreadful duty. On the third day of their journey, Abraham discovers the place appointed of God, requires the young men to halt, while he and the lad would go on and worship. He lays the wood on him who was to be consumed by it, and in his own hand he carries the fatal instrument of death, and the fire, which was to kindle the flame, that would reduce to ashes his only son, Isaac, whom he loved. Who, that has a father's heart, can hear that lovely, innocent boy, in the simplicity of his heart, ask his father, behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? Surely if God had not given Abraham strength according to his day, here his heart must have failed him; but mark the faith, the wisdom, and the prudence of his answer. My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together. Arrived at the place which God had told him of; he builds an altar, lays the wood in order, binds his son, lays him on the wood on the altar, and stretches forth his hand to give the fatal blow. A moment more, and the life blood of his darling son, shed by the father's hand, would have stained the holy altar. The angel of the Lord calls from heaven; the blow is forbidden; the beloved son is saved, and a ram, caught in the thicket, offered in his stead.

When we have looked at this divine picture of the astonishing faith and obedience of Abraham, it is im-

possible for us not to think of the perfect faith and obedience of his son Isaac. Surely, Abraham, when he was about to bind his son, must have communicated to him the divine command, and he, knowing his father's truth, believes and obeys; or rather, beholding his Father, God, says in his heart, not my will, but thine, be done. When we allow these reasonable conjectures, we know not which most to admire, the father, who gives up the life of the son, or the son who gives up his own life, at the requirement of the father.

Behold the reward of his faith and obedience. The angel of the Lord called the second time out of heaven unto Abraham, saying, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen. xxii. 1—18.) Let the advocate of human righteousness here observe, that the obedience of Abraham was the ground of the promise. We take leave to say, that his obedience was the evidence of his faith, and the result of his faith, and that unless he had believed it was God who spoke, he could not have obeyed. Here let it be observed, that what God hath now sworn to, he had already promised; and when we acknowledge that the word of God is sufficient to establish any thing, we may be asked, why then did he swear? We find the answer given. That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a

strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. (Heb. vi. 18,) The promise is renewed to Isaac, in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Gen. xxvi. 4.) Jacob was told in vision, thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. xxviii. 15.) Surely all will acknowledge that the thing promised is blessedness, or happiness; and if we would put beyond doubt the extent thereof, let us run over with all possible brevity the promise, as it is given, and repeated. 1st. It is, "in Abraham all families of the earth." 2d. It is "in him, (Abraham) all the nations of the earth." 3d. It is, "in thy seed, (Abraham's,) all the nations of the earth." 4th. It is, to Isaac, "in thy seed, all the nations of the earth." 5th. It is, "in thy seed, all the families of the earth." And, as if to make assurance doubly sure, Jacob is told, thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth. Could any thing more fully take in the world of mankind? All are formed of the dust, and it is therefore impossible, that the extent of this promise can be confined to the literal descendants of Jacob. We may be told here that the enjoyment of this blessedness belongs only to believers, inasmuch as those who are of faith, the same are the children (or seed) of Abraham, (Gal. iii. 7.) and blessed with faithful Abraham. (Gal. iii. 9.) This is true, but it is equally true, that while one, formed of the dust of the earth, remains in unbelief, the measure of the promise is not yet filled; it requires that the whole race of man be blessed with faithful Abraham. And we confidently

believe the word of promise, and gladly receive the consolation of the oath of God; it was not intended for unbelievers, but for those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them. (Heb. vi. 18.) We need this consolation, for how few receive the *word* of God on this subject; and we have never yet found an instance, where one would reject the word of God, who would believe him even on his oath.

How well does this view of the extent of the blessing agree with the angel's annunciation of the birth of the Saviour, as good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Who can refrain from joining with the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke ii. 11. 13, 14.)

It has been well said, that Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture; and in this case has it not been so? What pleasure we have received from the consideration of those divine truths, to which the apostolic definition of the Gospel hath led us.

It may here be reasonably asked, what is the enjoyment of those who enter into the joy of those promises? We answer, a life of endless blessedness given us in Christ Jesus. THIS IS THE GOSPEL.

We think it will be acknowledged, that without consciousness there can be no life; and if it be said, that there may be conscious misery, we answer, this is no part of our subject; for misery in endurance, or in expectation, or the news of it, or the threat of it, whether to ourselves or others, can never belong to that which is glad tidings of great joy.

Our hope of future existence depends principally on the promise of the Saviour, who says, "because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) And that this life shall be endless, we also know from him, when he tells us, that as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. (John v. 26.) Now, as we know the Father to be self-existent, and of endless duration, the Son, by this declaration, must be of endless duration also; and as he has told us, that his is the cause of our life, we think it no unreasonable conclusion, that so long as he, the Saviour, lives, we shall live also. Or, in other words, the life of Jesus will be co-eternal with the self-existent God; and his, the Saviour's, life, being the cause of ours, we, as the consequence, must continue world without end. This promise of the Saviour is, to us, infinitely superior to all the philosophy of man, on the subject of the nature of the soul, and the probability of its duration beyond the present state.

Thus saith the Lord for our immortality, we believe, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. That it will be a life of blessedness we know, for Jesus hath gone to prepare a place for us. (John xiv. 2.) And we know that he understands our wants infinitely better than we do; that he hath both the will and the ability to prepare a place for us, as much superior to any thing we can conceive, as his wisdom and power are greater than ours. Who, under the influence of this faith, will not say, to depart and be with Christ is far better? (Phil. i. 23.)

To be with Christ is to be like him, for we shall see him as he is. (1 John iii. 2.) To be like Christ, like

God! who can bear the splendour of this glory? None but those who know God, and Christ, whom he hath sent; (John xvii. 3;) and, having this knowledge, they have, even here, the enjoyment of life eternal. They know the great leading attributes of God, and they know that these appeared in Christ.

Let us then examine this glory, by these attributes of God. God is infinite in wisdom. Shall we be like him? then shall we be infallible, making no more errors of the understanding. God is love. Shall we be like him? then shall the heart of stone be far from us, and a new heart of tenderness and love be ours. God is almighty. Shall we be like him? then shall we have power to do all that love in the heart, directed by light in the understanding, could desire and design. Let no one suppose, that by this likeness to God, we infringe upon the incommunicable infinity of God. No, no—this is impossible; he, and he only, hath a strict and proper infinity, a circle of never-beginning, never-ending being and perfection; he hath a past and future eternity—we only a future. Nor do we murmur at this, but rather rejoice; for as we may grow in grace here, why may we not grow in glory hereafter? nay, the hope that we will brightens the divine prospect. Is there any thing unreasonable in the hope that our love will grow stronger and stronger, our wisdom and knowledge more and more extensive, as we continue longer and longer in the communion of angels, and of God? or that our power to accomplish what is according to the light and love of God should grow stronger and stronger through all eternity, being ever increased from the inexhaustible source of all power?

Have we not seen that the enjoyment of the Gospel is the knowledge of a life of endless blessedness? Let us now inquire, how is it, that it is given us in Christ Jesus? The answer is given us of God, who speaks by his inspired apostle, and says, the record that God gave of his Son is, that he hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (1 John v. 10, 11.) What proof can be clearer, or more to our purpose—what evidence can be stronger? for we have God himself for our witness! Should any so far misunderstand the context of our last quotation, we will now only say, that it is our purpose, (God giving the opportunity,) at a future time, to enter more fully into the consideration of our last quotation, and its context, which, we think, will establish the plain declaration, that our eternal life is given us in Christ Jesus. Having thus far progressed in the subject of our text, let us again say, what is the Gospel of God our Saviour? and are we believers of it?

1st. What is the Gospel of God our Saviour? We have already said, it is a life of endless blessedness, given us (i. e. all men) in Christ Jesus. Do we believe this, all this? and so believe with our understanding, that we are able to give to those who ask of us a reason of the hope that is within us? then are we Christians in the true sense of the term, persons trusting in Christ for salvation. In proportion as we reject any part of this divine communication, so do we lose the right to the name of Christian. Do we look for endless blessedness without Christ, and say, cannot God save by any other way? we answer, no! for he is the way, and the only way, which God hath chosen; for Deity

can do nothing but that which is wisest and best, and such hope is the height of absurdity, never to be realized. Do we hope to gain endless blessedness by our imitation of Christ? This is little better; for this blessedness is the *gift* of God, not the purchase of man. Can man make God his debtor? If we had obeyed the law of God perfectly from the earliest dawn of being, would it have put God under any obligation to have given us endless life and blessedness? Certainly not; for, as respects him, we are unprofitable servants. (Luke xvii. 10.) The reward of man is *in* the doing; for in keeping of them (the judgments, statutes, and commandments of the Lord) there is GREAT REWARD. If, then, obedience is accompanied by great reward, what reason is there in looking for future payment, especially for one so perfect and eternal? No, the doctrine of salvation is a doctrine of free, unmerited, and boundless grace, extensive as the family of man, and endless as eternity.

Do you expect this blessedness from the partial favour of God to you? What right have you? Your marks and tokens will prove little more than that you are a Pharisee, saying, stand by, for I am holier than thou. (Is. lxv. 5.) Know thyself; know that thou art a poor fallen creature; a sinner; yea, a sinner against God and man; know thine own helplessness; feel the necessity of a Saviour; believe, and be saved.

Should any say, this doctrine tends to licentiousness; we answer, in the language of inspiration, that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world. (Tit. ii. 11, 12.) God grant, that we may so ornament our profession.

(We will continue our subject at our next meeting.)

THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

(CONTINUED.)

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

OUR text has been repeatedly before us; we have exhibited our view of the Gospel; we are now to inquire into the nature and necessity of faith.

An inspired apostle tells us, that faith is the substance (ground, or confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; (Heb. xi. 1;) but so various and discordant have been the views which men have taken of the Holy Scriptures, that some, either from inability to discern, or want of industry to search after truth, have given up the pursuit, or fallen into such a state of indifference respecting it, that they forget its value, and think themselves liberal when they exclaim,

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

Now, we cannot see why a man, obeying the apostolic injunction, by earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints, (Jude 3,) should be consider-

ed as graceless, or without the favour of God; neither have we found the man whose life is in the right. Who can look into the law of God in its purity, then into his own heart, and answer to the heart-searching God, Not guilty? If one is on the face of the earth so great a stranger to his God and to himself, surely he can see no necessity for a Saviour; with him, one faith is as good as another, and none as good as any. We fear that there is an error in the religious world respecting faith in religion; that it is something different in its essential nature from faith on other subjects; the apostle makes no difference, why should we make any? We make none; we believe, on evidence, a thousand things relative to past ages, and respecting foreign countries, persons, and things, in the present age; nay, there is not a day, or hour, that we live, but we put faith in those with whom we have intercourse; and why is it that we thus put faith in poor, fallible, weak man? We answer, our faith is in proportion to the evidence we have, that our expectations will not be disappointed; and when we place no confidence, we have no faith, we withdraw our intercourse, and avoid all connexion. How plain and simple a thing is faith: it is merely confidence grounded on evidence. In the case before us, what ground of confidence have we for the faith which we profess? We answer, the greatest and the best: the word of God. Our fellow men may, under the most plausible appearances, deceive us; our senses may deceive us; but the word of God never can. And this is the word which, by the Gospel, is preached unto you. (1 Pet. i. 25.)

Has not this Gospel been preached unto us? is it not

glad tidings of great joy? shall it not be to all people? is it not endless life to us (i. e. all men) in Christ Jesus? and have we not for the ground of our confidence the word of him who cannot lie? Surely, those who have such evidence must shut their eyes and ears, or believe.

But we are told, he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; it is, therefore, our duty to consider the subject of baptism. And here we might enter into a wide field of controversy, and endeavour to show you what men have thought, and why they so thought, on this part of our text; but on this we will be brief. It does appear to us, that it is expedient, that on entering into any community, there is a propriety in having some fixed form or rule by which the party so received should be recognised as a member of that community. John the Baptist used external baptism; and the Saviour not only submitted to it, but approved it, saying, thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. (Mat. iii. 15.) The doctrine of John was, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and therefore he required of the multitude repentance; but when Jesus appeared, to be baptized, he would have declined; and it was only on the Saviour's persevering that John submitted. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Mat. iii. 16, 17.) Such was the honour conferred on the external baptism of John; for, surely,

even at that early day Jesus had the Spirit of God without measure.

John's baptism ended with his ministry; and so sensible was he of his inferiority to him of whom he was but the herald, that he says to Jesus, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (Mat. iii. 14.) and to the multitude, I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. (Mat. iii. 11.)

This is the baptism we desire; the baptism of Jesus; the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and of fire. We must, however, acknowledge, that Jesus countenanced external baptism; for the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples. (John iv. 1, 2.)

Baptism, as practised among professing Christians, varies in its subjects and its forms, but we believe all who practise it, consider it indicative of cleansing, or purification: some, considering all infants proper subjects, baptize by sprinkling; and if this is in token of that sprinkling which cleanseth from all sin, why is it not appropriate? others consider, that the baptism of infants must be confined to the children of believers; and if this is because children are heirs of the promises made unto the fathers, (for the promise is unto you and your children—Acts ii. 39,) then their rule is according to their understanding of Scripture. Those who consider believers only as fit subjects of baptism, usually immerse; and this being done as a sign of our being

buried with Christ in baptism, and risen with him, (Col. ii. 12,) we cannot but acknowledge, that the form seems suited to the case. While we neither pretend to support any one of these forms to the exclusion of all others, there is one thing in which we rejoice: We believe that each performs this rite in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; thus distinguishing the distinctive character of each, and the unity of the three. Will any one object to this? it is the command of Christ, who says, by his evangelist Matthew, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, (or make disciples, or Christians, of all nations,) baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Mat. xxviii. 19.) But what is our own practice relative to this matter? We answer, that, considering Christ as the head of every man, (1 Cor. xi. 3,) we receive even infants as members of his body, and dedicate them to God, the Father of their spirits, to whom they properly belong, to be baptized with his baptism, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, pronouncing on them the blessing wherewith God commanded Moses to bless all his people, saying, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And returning the child with this short exhortation: Take this child, the gift of God, our common Father, bring him (or her) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and God will bless you and him (or her.) When the party thus baptized, or dedicated, is an infant, it must be considered as the act of the party offering, and a recognition of the

doctrine taught in the place; when an adult, it is, of course, a confession of the faith of the party thus acting.

It is worthy of observation, that Christ says, teach all nations, or make disciples, or Christians, of them. Now, how is this to be done but by teaching, or preaching to them the Gospel, the glad tidings of great joy; by showing to them the need of a Saviour, and the all-sufficiency of that Saviour whom God hath provided? Is it not the duty of every one who presents a child, to labour with all diligence to bring up that child, and feed it with the nourishment which the word of God provides; and to admonish, with all patience and fidelity, of the evil of transgression, and to show, that while God is indeed the Saviour, yet as the moral governor of the universe, he will not suffer his laws to be broken with impunity; that he hath made the way of the transgressors hard? (Prov. xiii. 15.)

John had promised that Jesus Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. (Mat. iii. 11.) This is the baptism that is essential to our happiness. In what way hath Christ fulfilled this promise? We answer, by the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost, when the apostles were all, with one accord, in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts ii. 1—4.) Here it may be asked, what interest have we in this, for the age of miracles hath

long since passed away? We answer; the evidence we have of the performance of the miracle, being sufficient, is as good to us for the fact, as if we had been present. And again; are not the Scriptures of the New Testament written under the influence of the Divine Spirit, or Holy Ghost? and these being faithfully handed down to us, therefore, wherever, and to whomsoever the sacred book is sent, in all ages, and to all the world, the Holy Ghost yet teacheth; and to those who listen and believe is the enjoyment of the holy flame of love, of love to God, as the Saviour and Sanctifier of man; and love to man as the redeemed of the Lord. Our faith and our felicity arise from our receiving the testimony of the Holy Ghost, as thus handed down to us through the apostles.

But is this baptism? It is; for if baptism be cleansing, or immersion, or both, then is it the baptism of the Spirit; for who can read, understand, and believe, the efficacy of the atonement, and not feel the influence of that blood which cleanseth from all sin?

Who can see the Son of God suffer for him, and not loathe himself as a sinner, and love the Redeemer as his Saviour?

And is not the natural influence of this feeling a tendency to moral cleansing? and though while in the flesh he cannot hope for perfection of righteousness in himself, yet he looks to Christ as his righteousness.

Thus is he baptized or cleansed, in the way of God's appointment; and if baptism be immersion, what then are we to understand by the term? Cannot a man be immersed in any thing but water? Is not a man immersed in that which is the chief pursuit of his life, and which

he desires above all other things? When a man is absorbed in business or in pleasure, in hatred or in love, do we not say he is so immersed in these, he is swallowed up in them? And when we find a man so taken up with the study of the principles and practice of that which the Holy Ghost teacheth that all worldly interests are as nothing in comparison, is it any improper mode of expression for us to say, he is immersed in the things of the Spirit of God? Is this, or is it not, the baptism of the Holy Ghost? We think it is. We do not say, that there is any miracle in it, but that it is the natural effect of humbly listening to the divine teaching which God hath placed before us. Was not Paul absorbed by, or immersed in, the Spirit, when he said, I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified? (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

Believe me, my friends, we are unwise if we do not make religion the great business of life; if we do not consider fortune, fame, power, with all else that the world calls great and good, as of no value in comparison; and in truth they are not, for what enjoyment in this life can equal the peace of God, which passeth all understanding? (Phil. iv. 7.) and beside this, the assurance of the understanding, that we shall have a perpetuity of bliss in the world to come. The world has nothing that will compare with these; nay, all things in the world are less than nothing, and vanity, beside them. The true Christian is the most happy man in the world; nay, he is the only happy man in the world; for all the pleasures of life, whether innocent or vicious, end with life, but the pleasures of religion last to eternity.

We are now to consider the close of our text, namely, the consequences of receiving the Gospel, or rejecting it; for the salvation consequent upon believing, is no part of the thing to be believed; and surely the condemnation can never be any part of good news. And first let us consider the effect of believing this good news. Perhaps we would do well to inquire what was the mental and moral state of the world in the day of the apostles, and by comparison with the effect of faith on the believer, see the salvation of faith. The apostle to the Gentiles tells of them, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. (Rom. i. 21, 22. 28.) Nor does the Jew appear to be any better; for he tells us of them, that through them the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles. (Rom. ii. 24.) And speaking of both Jew and Gentile, he says, what then? are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (Rom. iii. 9—12.) And when writing to the church of Ephesus, and speaking of their state previous to their conversion, he says, that at that time they were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the

covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. (Eph. ii. 12.)

How terrible is this description of the world, as it then was! How miserable must it then have been!

It was necessary that we should thus see the true state of man, and the necessity there was, and is, for a Saviour; and let us ever bear in mind, that the same cause will produce the same effect. And now, without entering into the subject of the civil and religious advantages conferred on the world by the spreading of Christianity among the nations of the earth, let us ask ourselves, are not we, also, at least in some degree, guilty of the transgressions of former days?

(We hope to close our subject at our next meeting.)

THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

(CONCLUDED.)

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.—(Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

In our last discourse we had entered on the consideration of the consequences of believing, and of rejecting the Gospel; and here we took leave to say, that these consequences are no part of the thing to be believed. But let no one think that we do not firmly believe in them as consequences; so far from this, we do most solemnly declare, that we do as heartily and sincerely believe in them as consequences, as we do in the glorious truth of the Gospel offered to our acceptance: they are the words of the living God.

That we might the better see the advantages of faith, we took a scriptural view of the mental and moral state of the world without it, and found the Gentile rejecting the knowledge of God, professing himself wise, but becoming a fool; and the Jew to be no better; that through him, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles; and that previous to faith, men were without hope, and without God in the world We also made application of the subject to ourselves, by asking;

"Are not we also, at least in some degree, guilty of the transgressions of former days?" Surely, neither Jew nor Gentile, previous to Christianity, had any means of knowing God, that we have not; and yet how many are there in this day, who, if asked, what do you know of the existence or character of God? would be greatly at a loss for a rational answer; and of those who would be thus embarrassed, are there not a few who fancy themselves much wiser than their fellows? Is it unjust in God, if in his administration of his government of the world, he gives such up to a reprobate mind, to fix their affections on things which can continue but a little while, which perish in the using; nay, which, even as respects this life, are often worse than useless My loved friends, if we prefer any thing to the truth of God; if we are even guilty of coveting any thing that it does not appear to be the will of God to give us, it is idolatry. (Col. iii. 5.) In such case, what then are we better than they? (Rom. iii. 9.) Are we not, like the Ephesians before their conversion, without hope, and without God in the world? And why is the unbeliever without hope? Because he is without God, or, rather, the knowledge of God. Have we this knowledge? We trust we have! for God has been pleased to manifest to us his attributes in the Holy Scriptures; and the Scriptures we find to be the candle of the Lord, by which we read the fair book of nature, or creation, and rejoice to find the God of nature and of grace is one.

Thus enjoying this divine light, we cannot but believe the glad tidings of great joy presented to us.

What, then, are we saved from by this faith?

1st. We are saved from the fear of future misery;

for, to the penitent on the cross our Lord says, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise; (Luke xxiii. 43;) or, as we would say, the garden of delights. To justify us in this mode of expression, we observe that in the Vulgate, or Latin translation of the Old Testament, (Gen. ii. 8,) the translation is *paradisum voluptatis*. See on this subject Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible, articles Paradise and Vulgate. Some have thought that this is the place where the souls of the righteous remain from death till the resurrection;* but, whatever may be the truth in this matter, there can be no doubt of its being a place of happiness.

2d. We are saved from the fear of annihilation; a fear which, we think, must occasionally afflict the mind of him who has no knowledge of that life and immortality which are brought to light through the Gospel. (2 Tim. i. 10.) It is perfectly in vain for any one to say, I have long since, and for ever, rejected the doctrine of endless misery; is not the result, therefore, the assurance of endless life? We answer, no; for the rejection of an error by no means implies the belief of the truth; nay, could we collect together all the errors that ever passed in the world under the name of truth; could we give to each a material form, and pile them to the very heavens, and at a stroke destroy them all, it would, at best, be but a negative good obtained; for it is not by the rejection of error, but by the belief of the truth, that we enter into rest. (Heb. iv. 3.) Wherever the providence of God has made it the duty of your speaker to advocate the truth of God, he has thought it

* Wesley's Notes on the New Testament.

a duty to express this sentiment; and has added to it, that if the lifting of his finger would make such Universalists of the world, he did not know that he would do so; and now he is pretty sure that he would not; nay, he is not sure but it would, in him, be an offence before God. And why an offence? Because the bulk of mankind are under the evil influence of their passions, and may be restrained by the fear of suffering from the omnipotent power of God, whose existence and justice they have not entirely forgotten; whom they dread, but do not love? Why then should we regret, that the infuriate passions of unbelieving man should be bound by the iron fetter of fear, until he can be restrained by the more powerful influence of faith, in the soft and silken cord of love?

3d. We are saved from the slavish fear of death. There is indeed a natural attachment to life, which the Author of our being appears, for wise and good purposes, to have fixed in all animated nature; and we do not pretend to be without its influence; we are husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and brethren; these are dear to us, and they ought to be so; to part with them without a sigh, would rather prove, that we were so hardened in heart that we were unfit for heaven, than prove resignation to the will of God. It is the slavish fear of death we are freed from. Now this fear is not so properly the fear of dying, as of being dead. This the believer has no fear of, for he knows that notwithstanding all his unworthiness, his life is hid with Christ in God; (Col. iii. 3;) and he rejoices in the victory which God hath given him over death and the grave, through our Lord Jesus Christ; (1 Cor. xv. 55—57;) and

therefore for him to depart is to be with Christ. (Phil. i. 23.)

4th. We are saved from the anxious solicitudes which so often destroy even the innocent pleasures of life, in the man who has no hope beyond the present state. How many live in the luxuries of life, and yet live in the constant fear that they will die poor? The believer knows that there is no want to them that fear God; that they that seek the Lord shall not want any good. (Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10.) He hath been taught that godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1 Tim. iv. 8.) He hath heard the voice of his Divine Master reproving the anxiety of the world respecting food and raiment; (and this is all the physical enjoyment man can have in this life;) he hath obeyed the divine injunction by seeking, and has found the kingdom of God, and *his* righteousness, and finds the Saviour faithful to his promise, by adding all these things unto him. (Mat. vi. 24—34.) How conclusive is the reasoning of Paul on the providing care of God: he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. (Rom. viii. 32.) How supremely good is God! How supremely blessed is the believer! God gives him all he needs; what more can he desire? He asks no return but confidence in the giver, and gratitude for the gift. He gives freely. He himself loveth a cheerful giver. (2 Cor. ix. 7.) And shall we not love him, who not only gives us all things (that is) all that is truly good for us? (and surely that man is insane who desires what is not good for him;) but, above all, shall we not love him, who, without our

asking, gave us the greatest and the best of gifts, by delivering up his Son for us all? We repeat it, the Son of God was given for us without our asking. Did Adam ask for the seed that should bruise the serpent's head? Did Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, ask for the seed in which all the nations and families of the earth should be blessed? O, no! For Christ was in the Divine mind, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. xiii. 8.) What shall they fear respecting the good of this world, who have life eternal given them in the Son of God?

5th. The believer is saved from all fear, on the subject of his future blessedness. He sees no reason why he should doubt the truth of God's Gospel. In proportion as a man doubts so is he without faith, and is condemned. (Rom. xiv. 23.) He who doubts on the subject of his salvation, cannot but fear; and fear hath torment; (1 John iv. 18;) but the believer enters into rest. (Heb. iv. 3.) The slightest doubt in the mind would disturb this rest, as the slightest pain of the body disturbs the physical enjoyment; the undoubting believer, and he only, hath perfect spiritual repose.

6th. The believer is saved from the sorrow that is without hope. The experience of the world, in all ages, proves the fact, that man is born to trouble, as naturally as it is for the sparks to fly upward. (Job v. 7.) Faith does not prevent us from feeling the ills of life, but it supports us under them; for God is faithful, who, with the temptation or trial, makes a way to escape. (1 Cor. x. 13.) Who hath come to years of maturity, and hath not been called to part with some near and dearly beloved friend or relative, one whom it not only was a duty

to love, but who deserved to be loved? Is it possible not to sorrow under such a trial? It is not possible. But there is sure and certain comfort; for them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (1 Thes. iv. 14.) Nay, there is comfort in every case; for all things work together for good to them that love God. (Rom. viii. 28.) Here the believer sees the measure of divine guardianship in life; for he looks not merely at the principle as regards the current and tenor of life, but in all that belongs to it, from the trial of the fiery furnace and the lions' den, to the numbering of the very hairs of his head; from the fiery trial exhibiting death in most terrific form, to the single hair of the head, in human wisdom unworthy of notice, all are noticed of God, and all a series of unremitting good, even though each should come under the guise of evil. What enjoyment, this side heaven, can be superior to this? if any thing, it must be

7th. That the believer walks with God. Is not this to have the Supreme Being for our companion, for our constant companion; for our protector, counsellor, and comforter? What condescension in God! What security and blessedness to man! Had we not the divine assurance of the fact, we might doubt the possibility of it; but it is true, and we rejoice in it. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. (Gen. v. 24.) Noah was a just man, and perfect (or upright) in his generations; and Noah walked with God. (Gen. vi. 9.) But it may be said, these were the distinguished worthies of old—what right have we to expect that God will thus be with us? We answer, is not every believer one of the church of God? Hear, then, what he saith to his church: When thou passest through

the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (Is. xliii. 2.) Blessed be thy name, O Lord, our God; for, though we have merited none of these mercies, yet hast thou freely given to us them all. This brings us to the close of our text.

He that believeth not shall be damned. In entering on this subject, we take leave to say, that we as firmly believe this, as we do the salvation of God; but then we desire to receive it, as we are persuaded God meant it, and not according to the misunderstanding of prejudiced men. What is the meaning of the word? look at any English dictionary, and we think you will find, that though it is always to condemn, the nature and duration of the condemnation must ever be according to the cause of condemnation, or damnation. D'Oyly and Mant, in their Notes on the Bible, quoting Bishop Tomline as authority, say, on 1 Cor. xi. 29., it is material to observe, that the word "damnation," when the Bible was translated, meant no more than condemnation; any sentence of punishment whatever. Doctor Doddridge, a dissenter, says, on the same passage: I think it the most unhappy mistake in all our *versions* of the Bible, that the word κριμα, *krima*, is here rendered *damnation*. It has raised a dread in tender minds, which has greatly obstructed the comfort and edification they might have received from this ordinance. The *apostle* afterwards says, *we are judged*, (that is, as he afterwards explains it, *we are corrected*,) *that we may not be condemned*; which plainly shows, the judgments spoken of might be fatherly chastisements.

Now, we are not quite so squeamish as the doctor relative to this word; for, if damnation, rightly understood, means condemnation, and we believe it does, what would we gain by the alteration?

We cannot possibly suppose that any are included in this condemnation, but those who have had an opportunity of knowing the truth of the Gospel, and have obstinately rejected it. We have seen some of the blessings arising from the belief of the Gospel: will not the sinful rejection be followed by the reverse of these? Let us look at them in order: and, 1st. We think he must live in the fear of future, and, perhaps, of endless misery; for, if he thinks that there may be a God, he must know his own accountability, feel his guilt, and dread punishment; nay, from what he has so often heard from professing Christians, that it is of endless duration, he knows, if these are correct, all before him must be the blackness of darkness.

2d. He may try to take hope from the doctrine of annihilation; but it is all in vain; for the soul shrinks back upon itself, and startles with inward dread and horror at the thought of falling into naught.

3d. He must live in the constant slavish fear of death; he has no hope beyond the grave; his good is all here, and death is every hour coming nearer and nearer, to rob him of all that is dear to him, and will not suffer him to take with him the merest trifle of all that he called his own.

4th. He spends his life here, seeking enjoyment, but finding none; for he has sense enough to see the uncertainty of these things continuing, even to the end

of this life; and the knowledge of this truth stings even in the moment of enjoyment.

5th. He knows that he must die; and in the single word death, there is every thing that he would avoid. The case of suicide is no objection to this truth, for the charity of the world has pronounced it insanity; and where it is not, it is an act of supreme wickedness, an we know that there is no peace to the wicked. (Is. lvii. 21.)

6th. He finds the ordinary ills of life press more heavily upon him; for when friends are faithless, he is a stranger to the friendship of God. When poverty overtakes him, he cannot turn to him who can, and often does, make poverty a blessing; he is without hope, because he knows not God.

7th. When the thought of the existence of God crosses his mind, it gives the feeling of a culprit looking at his judge; he knows him not as a guide, and would fly from him if he could; he knows him not as a comforter, but as an accuser, who has placed conscience within him, as a worm that gnaws, and never dies.

What state can we conceive more terrible than this? What careful and unremitting pains should men take to avoid it! How shall it be avoided? By the belief of the Gospel, i. e. "eternal life given to us, i. e. to all men, in Christ Jesus;" less than this will not give us perfect peace. Eternal life without Christ Jesus, or the atonement, is a mockery of Christianity. Eternal life earned by us, even with the help of the Redeemer, is little better. Eternal life given to a part of mankind, is not the glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all men. The rejection of one part of the Gos-

pel, hazards the belief of the whole. Let us ever bear in mind, that according to our faith, such shall be our felicity; let us then be faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life. (Rev. ii. 10.) And though we should labour, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe; (1 Tim. iv. 10;) let us not return evil for evil, nor railing for railing.

We close with the apostolic exhortation: I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

THE RECORD OF GOD.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (1 John v. 11.)

We have often quoted the above passage; and on a late occasion your speaker pledged himself to attempt to show, that our understanding of the text is not contradicted by the context, but supported by it; and to do this, we will take from the 9th to the 14th verse, both inclusive.

Verse 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.

Now, it is perfectly evident, that we do receive the witness of men. All the proceedings of our courts of law, whether civil or criminal, are grounded on evidence, or the witness of men. On the witness of men we dispose of the character, the property, nay, the very lives of our fellows. It would be utterly impossible for society to exist without receiving the witness of men. There is not a day, and scarcely an hour of our lives, that we do not give credit to what we are told, and act upon it, thus showing our faith in our fellows, by the proof of our works.

But "the witness of God is greater." In what re-

spect is it? We answer; we receive, or confide, in the testimony of men, just in proportion as we think the party testifying has knowledge of the fact, and has no disposition to deceive us. And yet we know well, that men may testify falsely through ignorance, believing what they say to be true, when in fact it is false; but, what is worse than this, they may, through the temptation of acquiring some supposed good, or avoiding some supposed evil, testify to what they know to be false. And yet, with all this knowledge of the fallibility of human testimony, we dispose of all that is dear to man.

The testimony of God is as much greater than that of man, as God the Creator is greater than his creature; and for these plain and simple reasons, because he can neither be mistaken, nor tempted. He cannot be mistaken, for we are told in this epistle, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (i. 5.) How then can he who is light be mistaken, and testify falsely? Again; he cannot be tempted by the hope of acquiring good, when, as Creator, he is already the owner, and in entire possession of all things. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. (Ps. xxiv. 1.) God cannot be tempted with evil. (James i. 13.)

What can be more unreasonable than for us to put so much confidence in man, and not confide in God? and our folly is aggravated by the consideration, that the thing relative to which he hath condescended to appear as a witness, is that "which he hath testified o his Son." While we see and feel this truth, let us bear in memory, that whatever God does bear witness to, we are bound to believe, however contrary to all our pre-

conceptions of the matter; for his testimony is the highest authority which men or angels are capable of receiving.

Verse 10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

What are we to understand by the believer having the witness in himself? We can see nothing obscure, mysterious, or difficult to be understood, much less can we see any thing supernatural in it. When a witness is brought into court, and has given his testimony, that testimony is directed to the mind; the mind receives it. Is not the mind then in possession of it? Hath not that mind the witness in itself? and the person who hath that mind, hath he not the witness in himself? There is nothing more plain, nothing more common; and were it a matter of ordinary or of any earthly concern, we think it would be considered as a waste of words to attempt to prove it. The only difference between this and ordinary cases, is the importance of the subject, and the certainty of the testimony; the subject is eternal life; the certainty of the testimony is, that God gave it.

But we are told, that "he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar." We bless God, that, strictly speaking, it is not in the power of any man, nor of all men, to make God a liar: God cannot lie. (Titus i. 2.) How then can those words be true? In the plain common sense in which we have seen; receiving the witness in our selves by believing. When we hear a person testify to any fact, and do not believe what he says, we may perhaps, in charity, hope that he himself believes what he says, but speaks falsehood supposing it to be

true, and thus errs through ignorance; yet, because he spoke falsehood, he is a liar, though not morally so. But when we have reason to think he knew better, we consider him as guilty of a crime that lays the axe to the root of all human wisdom and happiness.

How do we now look upon the unbelief of man as making God a liar? Just as we do in ordinary cases, of man refusing credence to his fellow man.

There is another, but not contradictory view of this subject. Remove the comma from after the word God, and place it before it, and then it will stand, he that believeth not, God hath made him, (i. e.) the unbeliever, a liar. And it is well for the poor unhappy infidel, that it is so; for it is his own eternal life that is true, though he denies the fact. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar. (Rom. iii. 4.) And what is it that now makes man the liar? simply because God says one thing, and man another. The parties are at issue; whom shall we believe, God, or man? Every man who has any knowledge of God, knows that he must be true, and therefore the falsehood must be with the unbeliever. Now the cause of all this difficulty is, that man hath refused to believe the record, witness, or testimony, that God gave of his Son. But we have not yet heard what God hath witnessed. Will you believe it when you hear it? God grant you may; for we fear that very many who hear it, though they bear the Christian name, are strangers to its truth. And bear also in memory, that, whatever it is, it is true, because it is the word of the Lord.

If God were to condescend to speak to us after a supernatural manner, would we not be all eye, all ear,

all attention? And hath he not done this? Is not all the Divine revelation supernatural? Hear, then, for it is the very life of the soul that is concerned.

Verse 11. And this is the record, (witness, or testimony) that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Now, my friends, do you believe this? Perhaps you answer, without hesitation, that you do. Are you sure you do? You reply, that you know no reason why you should not. We perfectly accord with this; yet it will be profitable for us to examine the subject somewhat more minutely, then we shall better understand it. First, it is a gift; and the very idea of a gift prohibits the supposition of any thing, previously agreed to be given in return. A grain of sand given for a world, is barter or sale on both sides, and is not strictly a gift on either. Second, it is the doctrine of grace or favour; for what have we that we could offer to God for that which He here says he hath given? Not that he will give. Third, the thing given is the eternal, the endless life of the soul! Now, what can the creature render to the Creator for that which is above all price? The thing is impossible. Fourth, this life is given us in Christ Jesus, the Son of God. It is happy for us that God hath given this life eternal in his Son; this secures it to us, for he is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. (Heb. xiii. 8.) We would also observe, that the belief of a part of this testimony or record, to the rejection of any part, cannot be considered the belief of the record that God hath given us. Thus, if we believe in the doctrine of salvation by grace, and eternal life given us in ourselves, this could never be eternal life in Christ Jesus. Again, if we believe in life eternal secured for

us in Christ Jesus, on account of our works, or our faith, or of both together, much as we value both the one and the other, but each in its proper place, this would destroy the idea of this life eternal being the gift of God.

We must believe the simple truth of God, and all of it; namely, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Some one may say, what right have I to believe that God hath given this to me? We answer; is it not the very soul and spirit of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God? (1 Tim. i. 11.) Is it not the very thing spoken of by Paul as the Gospel of God, containing blessedness in the promised seed to all nations? (Gal. iii. 8. 16.) Was not the Gospel to be preached to all the world—to every creature? (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) Is it not the duty of those who hear the Gospel to believe it? and, having an opportunity to hear and know its truth, shall we not be condemned if we do not believe it? Again; we may be asked, how can this be true of those who are not yet born of God? We answer, the Gospel is sent to those who do not yet believe it, that they may believe and be saved. And this essence of the Gospel is given us that we may believe. God would not present us an untruth, and bid us to believe it. A parallel case to the spiritually unborn is far from uncommon. A father finds himself on his death-bed, and feels it a duty to dispose of his property by will. Some of his children are of full age, and capable in law of taking possession of the property bequeathed, and using it at their own discretion; some minors, who know their rights, but do not have possession. Guardians must take possession, and act for them. Some are

infants, who know nothing of their rights; but the law has a special regard for infants, and takes peculiar care of them. But there is one unborn, but expected. Does not the father, by anticipation, see this most helpless of all his orphan children, and make the due provision for it also? This child has rights as good and as secure in law as any of the others, and no man may interfere to injure its claims with impunity. So, the spiritually unborn cannot, by their ignorance, destroy the will of our Heavenly Father, in the rich inheritance of eternal life. When children come to years of discernment, and shut their eyes against the evidence of their title, they can have no enjoyment of it, and must feel all the miseries of poverty; but when the blindness is taken from their eyes, and they see and believe, their poverty vanishes, the sun of prosperity has arisen upon them, and they rejoice exceedingly. So is it spiritually: while in unbelief we are in poverty and misery; but when by faith we enter into rest, we know that we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. (Rom. viii. 17.)

The advantage of having, and the disadvantage of rejecting, this record of God, is given us in

Verse 12. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

No man can possibly be so absurd as to suppose, that by having the Son, is meant the literal possession of the body of the Redeemer; and if not, what can it mean, but the enjoyment of that spiritual life which God hath secured for us in Christ Jesus, and which we hold by the best possible title—the gift of God? This enjoyment is free from all enthusiasm; it is the calm

and sober conviction of the understanding, that because Jesus lives, we shall live also. (John xiv. 19.) This naturally lifts us above the slavish fear of death; it is the enjoyment of life eternal, it is heaven begun on earth. But may every one enjoy this? Every one who is capable of knowing that the hat or coat he wears is his own, is capable of knowing that eternal life is his own; for he can have no better testimony that the clothes he wears belong to himself, than the witness of God. And he who rejects this testimony sins against his own soul, shuts out the light of life, involves himself in mental darkness; has no rational assurance of the understanding that he will exist beyond the present state; and in proportion as he loves life must fear death; and fear hath, or is, torment.

Verse 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

What did they believe of the Son of God who were ignorant of this life in him? They may have believed that he was the promised Messiah, and that his kingdom was spiritual; but it is evident they were ignorant of the title they had to life in the Son, and it is equally evident that this title existed, and was theirs, when they knew nothing of it; else how could the apostle write to them, that they might know that this life was theirs; or, in his own emphatic words, "that ye may know that ye have eternal life?" What is the improvement we should make of this subject?

We also may have believed that Christ was the promised Messiah; that his kingdom was spiritual; we may, as his subjects, have been striving to increase our spi-

ritual wealth and bright crowns of glory; and yet, like those to whom the beloved disciple wrote, been strangers to this glorious but humiliating truth; for the doctrine of grace is humiliating; and the more extensive we see this grace, the more will it exalt Christ, and preserve us from pharisaism. Does this truth humble us? Humility is a Christian grace; and the deeper our humility, the more do we grow in grace, and, as in the present case, in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour; and, in the language of our text, we may more firmly, extensively, and minutely, "believe on the name of the Son of God."

This effect, we think, is alluded to

Verse 14. And this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

We think we have known the doctrine of Christian perfection stated to be an entire acquiescence in the will of God. We know no better definition. He who knows any thing of the wisdom of God, must be perfectly assured, that he knows our wants infinitely better than we do ourselves; and he must be a stranger to the love of God, who does not know that he is more willing to give, than we are to ask. Is it not then egregious folly in us to ask what he sees is not good for us? We ourselves do not desire evil, but good; and when we thus ask in submission, we do most distinctly express our own desire. "We know that he heareth us." And this very naturally leads us to the truth of the closing,

Verse 15. And if we know that he hear us what-

soever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

How have we what we desired of him? By anticipation; for, knowing that he will give it, if it is good for us, we are contented, our petition is granted; but if he sees that it is not good for us, we do not wish it, and then our petition is equally granted; and this felicity arises solely from our being able to say, with light in the understanding, and love in the heart, "Thy will be done."

God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. May he grant us an abiding sense of this truth, and may its fruits appear in our life and conversation.

THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY.

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according-ing to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah viii. 20.)

The Scriptures of God have been represented as a casket of jewels of inestimable value, and though each is above all price, yet we sometimes think a particular one is more brilliant than others; and so it appears to us is the one to which we now ask your attention; for what does the whole book of Revelation contain more than the law and the testimony of God?

David appears to have included the whole Mosaic economy, as the law of God, when he speaks of the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, and says of him, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Ps. i. 1, 2.) And this with strict propriety; for it was the same authority which commanded sacrifices and ceremonies that gave the decalogue, or ten commandments; and that the law and the doctrine of God were considered then as synonymous we find by the 19th psalm, where we read, (ver. 7,) the law of the Lord is perfect, convert-ing the soul; but in the margin we read, the doctrine

of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. When in process of time the children of Israel had corrupted their ways before God, he was pleased to mark his strong displeasure against all external professions of religion, when the lives of the professors gave evidence, that it was external show only. This he has done in the most forcible manner, by the prophet Isaiah, comparing them to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, reproving the multitude of their sacrifices, forbidding them to bring any more vain oblations; that his soul hated their appointed feasts and new moons; that they were a trouble to him; that he was weary to bear them; that he would not hear their prayer, for their hands were full of blood; and requiring of them to learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. (Is. i. 10—17.) How terrible a picture is this of moral depravity, and all under a splendid exterior of religion. Our danger in reading this reproof is, that we may possibly suppose that the God of Israel was rescinding his own rites and ceremonies appointed by himself. By no means; he was simply reproving the abuse of them; they remained, afterward, and he required the proper use of them. And here let us remark, that on no occasion does the abuse of any thing require of us that we should lay aside the proper use thereof, and, especially, a command of God.

When our Lord appeared on earth, we think that the Jews made a distinction between the moral and the ceremonial parts of the law, and that our Lord recognises this, when he receives with approbation the remark of the scribe; that to love God and man was

more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. (Mark xii. 32, 33.)

The ceremonial institutions of Moses not being obligatory on Christians, our view of the subject must therefore be strictly moral; and it is happy for us that our Lord hath given us the purest and most perfect view of the subject. Being asked by a certain scribe, which is the first commandment of all? Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment; and the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark xii. 28—31.)

Jews, Christians, and Mahometans, all agree in the unity of God, that there is one supreme, self-existent, Creator of all things. And when we thus acknowledge his existence, we must be constrained to acknowledge his right to give law to his creature; and in whatever way he is pleased to communicate it to us, whether by the small still voice of conscience, or by the clearer testimony of revelation, it is still his right to command, and our duty to obey.

The first part of this first or most important commandment, is to love God; but is this the mere dictate of authority, or has it a fitness in itself to recommend it to us? While we bow to the authority, we bless God for the evidence he hath given us of the fitness of the command, in the knowledge of his divine nature. Can we see his power in his works and not bow before it; or

his wisdom in their harmony and not admire it; or his goodness in providing for every living thing, and not acknowledge that he is worthy of our love? but, above all, can we as Christians consider him as giving his only begotten Son for our salvation, and we not love him who hath first so greatly loved us? God is love; from him we receive all that we have; and from him we expect all that we hope for, in time and in eternity. Have we any other source of hope? None. Have we his promise for good, and shall we not trust in him and love him for his goodness to us? This commandment requires of us that we love him with all the heart. The heart is the seat of the affections; and since we see something of the greatness of his love to us, let us ask ourselves what measure of love do we think God is worthy of, if not of the whole, the undivided heart? and if we do love him with the whole heart, is even then our love to him greater than his love to us? rather, is not his love to us infinitely greater than our love to him? Then must we ever be unspeakably debtors for his love to us.

We are also required to love with all the soul. The soul is that principle of existence within us, which God hath determined shall be of never ending duration; and if we are required to love with all the soul, then are we bound to continue this attachment through a never ending duration. And is there any thing unreasonable in this requirement? Surely, if Deity is unchangeable in his nature, the obligation to love him for himself must continue coequal with our endless being.

This great duty of loving God is also to be with all the mind. The mind is the seat of the understanding, and we believe that the more it is exercised on this sub-

ject, the stronger will be the conviction that this duty is reasonable in itself. The whole mind, without the shadow of a doubt, will acknowledge that all its powers ought to be constantly employed in the discharge of this first and great commandment. (Mat. xxii. 38.) Our Lord closes his definition by instructing us, that this love must be with all our strength; that is, as we conceive, that every power of the heart, and soul, and mind, are to be constantly and vigorously engaged therein. This is the first or most important commandment. And this introduces us to the second, which the Redeemer says is like unto it, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. We doubt whether any man can love God without finding the love of his neighbour following as a consequence; but who is my neighbour? This question was asked of our Lord, and his answer is given in the beautiful and affecting parable of the traveller, who had fallen among thieves, and, being left by them half dead, was relieved by the humanity of a Samaritan. The moral which is usually drawn from this fine story is indeed benevolent; that it is our duty to relieve the wants of the distressed, of whatever religion or nation. But we think there is another view of the subject, which is greatly interesting to us, and that is, that as the Samaritan was the party conferring the benefit, he was the neighbour, and to him was gratitude and love due from the traveller. Apply this to God and man, then what is the gratitude and love we owe to God? Man, betrayed by the arch deceiver, wounded and expiring by his own folly, is taken charge of by the great Benefactor, his immediate wants supplied, and provision made for all his future comforts.

How does this heighten our sense of gratitude to him, of the duty of loving him supremely, who is the giver of all good; and this, too, without impairing in the smallest degree the obligation we owe to our fellow men, who have acted the part of the Samaritan to us.

We have seen the great leading features of the law of God; love to him and love to our fellow men. Well may it be said, that love is the fulfilling of the law; (Rom. xiii. 10;) and that every one that loveth is born of God. (1 John iv. 7.) Were all men, at all times, under a willing subjection to these divine principles, what would the state of our world be? would it not be a constant intercourse between man and his Maker, and a constant intercourse between man and man, each striving to increase his own blessedness by conferring bliss on others; for it is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts xx. 35.) Our earth would be a heaven.

But, alas, for poor, fallen man, this is not the case, the extreme reverse of all this is true. It is a sad subject, and it is with painful feelings we enter on it, but a sense of duty compels us.

What evidence have we? We answer, the history of man as written by himself, and the history of man as written under the divine inspiration of God.

Look at profane history, and what does it exhibit to us but scenes of fraud and oppression, ambition and war; one nation rising into power on the ruins of another, and in its turn becoming the victim of some equally successful rival. Look at the state of the world at this moment, and what is it better? Take away the oppressor and the oppressed, and what population would be left behind?

If we look at the sacred page, how terrible the picture; rebellion entering the paradise of God through the medium of unbelief, and the first born of men taking away the life of an innocent brother. The long suffering patience of God waited for more than sixteen hundred years, and bore with the iniquity of man, and he then swept the world by the deluge. Is the character of the postdiluvian world able to stand before the law of God? Surely, No. The testimony of Scripture is full to the establishment of this melancholy fact.

He who would know the moral character of the postdiluvian world, need only read the first and second chapters of the epistle to the Romans, where he will find man represented as hating God, (i. 30,) and without natural affection; (ver.31;) the Jew causing the Gentile to blaspheme God; and in the third chapter, that the Jew is no better than the Gentile, that they are all under sin. (ver. 9.)

It is worthy of observation, that the law of God must in its own nature be of perpetual obligation, for it is the moral mirror of the divine mind. And let us not complain that it is too strict for the weakness of human nature. What could we expect from the infinitely pure Being, but that which is infinitely pure? Its purity is that which makes it a perfect rule of distinguishing, on all occasions, between moral right and wrong; it is the only perfect rule of human conduct. It requires an unbroken continuity of obedience. If not, then tell us when, and for how long, we may neglect its precepts with impunity. Again, the indulgence of desire for a moment, if contrary to any of its precepts, however small that precept may comparatively be in our estimation, constitutes a

breach of the law. And though our conduct may be correct in the sight of men, and thus, like that of Paul, as touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless, (Philippians iii. 6,) yet when, like him, we learn that it enters the mind, that it forbids lust or unlawful desire; that it says thou shalt not covet; (Rom. vii. 7;) then shall we be convinced of the impurity of our own hearts, and feel that we are sinners before God; ay, and in our own sight too; for who is so simple as not to know the meaning of such plain words as, thou shalt not covet. The effect of these few words of the law on Paul was, that the sense of sin revived in him, and he died, or felt the sentence of the law, which is death. (Rom. vii. 9.)

Again, though the precepts of the law were many, yet as a whole it is one; and the breach of any one part, being a breach of the law, constitutes the party an offender against the authority of God. And it is not unreasonable, that he who offends in one point is guilty of all. (James ii. 10.) He is a breaker of the law, and subject to its penalty. Who is he that willingly sins in any point, and yet can assure himself that under circumstances of strong temptation, he will not offend in any, nay, in every other? Who can say that he will not listen to the voice of interest, ambition, vanity, pride, revenge? Who can say how far the first sin, though in his estimation a little one, may lead him? Who can say to his passions, inclined to sin, thus far mayest thou go, but no further? The little sin will call for a little more, and a little and a little more, till that which was esteemed but a little is lost sight of, in the tremendous fury of the long indulged storm of passion; till at length he is con

vinced that passion governs him, with a power which he thinks he cannot control; and, therefore, giving himself up to its influence, he is ingulphed in all that makes man miserable here, and unfits him for the enjoyment of bliss in the world to come. Had this wretched being only seen how far his little sin might lead him; had he seen that no sin can be little in the sight of God, which leads to such direful effects, and all sin indulged in has this tendency, he would not have thought God a hard master, because he includes in his law the prohibition of an evil desire; he would have seen the wisdom and goodness of God in it, and have blessed him for it. But is the law indeed thus strict? Are not venial sins passed by? Not one.

Hear what God hath said on this subject.

Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (Gal. iii. 10.) We may, perhaps, be asked, who, then, can be saved? and we answer distinctly, that it never was the intention of God to give salvation to man by the law; and, being perfectly assured of this truth, it has been our earnest desire to destroy every vestige and shadow of a hope of eternal life, arising from so mistaken a view of the subject. And for proof that the law is not the way of salvation, we ask you to attend to the testimony of Scripture, where we are taught that the law entered that the offence might abound. (Rom. v. 20.) Who gave this law? was it not God? And why was it given? that offences might increase? Surely, no; but that the sense of offence existing might be deepened in the mind of the offender. Again; we know that what things soever the law saith, (and who

is not under the law of conscience or of Moses?) it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Rom. iii. 19, 20.)

How is it possible to believe these to be the true sayings of the living God, and yet cling to our obedience to the law as a ground of salvation?

THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY.

(CONCLUDED.)

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah viii. 20.)

At our last meeting, when we had this subject before us, we think we had sufficient evidence that there is no hope of salvation by the law; and yet the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. (Rom. vii. 12.) It is holy, because it comes from the holy God, from whom nothing that is unholy can possibly proceed. It is just, for it requires nothing but what the Creator might reasonably demand from his creature. It is good, for the observance of it, as we have seen, would produce a heaven upon earth. We may be asked, why, then, is it not the condition of salvation? We answer; the very idea of salvation implies some immediate or impending evil; and the very evil that it is necessary we should be saved from, is the sentence of that very law which we have broken; for man is a fallen creature. Surely man is not in the image of God,

either mentally or morally, in which he was created. (Gen. i. 27.)

Under this view of the subject, how is it possible that the law, or obedience to it, should be the condition of salvation? As well might the condemned prisoner at the bar of man appeal to the criminal law which has sentenced him, for a justification.

What, then, is our hope? There is no hope for us but Christ crucified; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. (Acts iv. 12.) Thanks be to God for this hope; and thanks be to him, that it directs us to him who laid down his life for us. (1 John iii. 16.) In whom could we so reasonably trust, as in that Being of whom it is said, that all things were created by him, and for him. (Col. i. 16.) We find we have got into the testimonies of God relative to our salvation; but before we proceed further in this delightful subject, we will look at some passages of Scripture which refer both to the law and the Gospel. The first we ask your attention to is this: The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John i. 17.) What the law is, we have seen; and what the grace, or favour, is, which we stand in need of, and earnestly desire, can be no less than an endless life of perfect blessedness. How can man give up the desire of natural life? and much more; can he give up the desire of life beyond the grave? and why does he desire life beyond the present state of being, but in the hope that it will be productive of good? Nor can he be contented with this, if, after all, it must be embittered by the sad reflection that it will come to an end, and he become as though he had never been? Nothing less can satisfy the mind than an

endless life of blessedness; and we rejoice to hear the Saviour say, that whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall never die. (John xi. 26.) The truth which is spoken of in connexion with this grace, we consider to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And if we are asked what is truth? we answer, that in principle it is the knowledge of things as they are; and in practice, it is the performance of that which we have pledged ourselves to do. This, we think, will apply to the case before us; for the infinite knowledge of God could not but see distinctly all that was, is, or would be; and on the fall of our first parents, he pledged his truth that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. (Gen. iii. 15.) How truly is this promise of God fulfilled to us by the Redeemer taking upon him our flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) Again; Paul, preaching at Antioch, says, Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Here the condemned sinner finds his deliverance, the forgiveness of his sins; and that not by an unholy contempt of the pure law of God, but by the meritorious death and resurrection of Christ. Again; it is those who thus believe in Christ, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, (Rom. iv. 25,) and those only, who can have in themselves the consolatory sense of their justification. And

thus the same apostle reasons: therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 1.) Not that our faith can be the meritorious cause of our justification, but the resurrection of Christ, who rose for this very purpose, namely, *for*, or that we might be justified; and we, by believing this truth, have peace with God in our own minds.

The Scriptures abound with testimony of the insufficiency of the law, and the all-sufficiency of grace in Christ Jesus. In the epistle to the Galatians, Paul says, I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Gal. ii. 21.)

Now, we think, that every man calling himself a Christian, is bound to inquire whether Christ died as a martyr or as a sacrifice. We have no hesitation to assert, that he did not die as a martyr, but as a sacrifice. The martyr suffers the death he cannot avoid, rather than abjure his faith. It is even his duty to use all proper means of avoiding martyrdom. His Lord commands him thus to seek his safety by flight, when he says, when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another. (Mat. x. 23.) Such is the duty of the follower of Christ. But Christ himself was no martyr, he was a willing sacrifice. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. (1 Cor. v. 7.) Is it possible for any one who reads the New Testament, and knows what Jesus himself says of the end for which he came into the world, to consider him merely as a martyr?

Speaking of himself as the bread of life which came down from heaven, he says, and the bread that I will

give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John vi. 48, 51.) I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. (John x. 17, 18.) I lay down my life for the sheep. (John x. 15.) And in view of his sufferings and death, he says, for this cause came I unto this hour. (John xii. 27.) Is this the language of a martyr? No. It is the representation of him who was at once the victim, and the offerer of the sacrifice, Jesus Christ, the High Priest of our profession. (Heb. iii. 1.) Believing this truth, we do not frustrate the grace of God, and to us Christ is not dead in vain; but to those who do not thus believe, they cannot trust in the death of Christ for salvation; and while continuing in unbelief, Christ must to them be dead in vain. Here let us at once declare our firm conviction, that every man is a Christian, just in proportion as he trusts in Christ for salvation.

The same apostle continues the same subject when he says, Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. (Gal. iii. 21.)

This text ought to put an end to all controversy, on the insufficiency of the law to give us life eternal. The law is not against the promises of God; it rather shows us the absolute necessity of a better way; it deepens in our mind the truth of the fact that we are sinners, and makes us more earnestly desire that God would be pleased to find out some way of mercy. And, as if the apostle intended to put this matter beyond all

possibility of doubt, he says, Christ is become of no effect unto you. Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace. (Gal. v. 4.) There appears to be a continual struggle in the world, between the principle of salvation by the law of God, and the principle of salvation by the grace, or favour of God, in Christ Jesus. The absurdity of the first has, we hope, been too clearly manifested to admit of doubt. There is then nothing left us but a dependence on the mercy of God; but we are constrained to say, that we think there may be an unwarranted dependence on this mercy; and every hope that does not depend on that mercy as manifested in Christ Jesus, is unwarranted by Scripture. But if we are not mistaken, there has something like a middle way been struck out for us, that seems as if it intended to unite both law and Gospel; and the lovers of this way say, what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. But we know no other way in which they can be seen in Scripture, than the first making more manifest the necessity of the second. When speaking on this subject, we have been accustomed to speak of it something in the following manner.

Suppose we consider the subject of our salvation as graduated on a scale of a hundred degrees; the whole must be filled up or we are not saved. What portion shall we allow to the righteousness of Christ? and what portion must be allowed to our own obedience or righteousness? For we are told, if we do our part, God will do his; or God hath done his part, and it is our business to do ours. The question still returns, what belongs to God, and what to us? Shall we say, that he hath laid the foundation in the grade of one, and on this we must

build the remainder; that is, we have to perfect the work in the degree of ninety-nine. You are shocked at this; for it gives to the creature ninety-nine degrees of honour, and the Creator one only. This will never do; for it exalts the creature above all that belongs to him, and puts God almost out of the question. Shall we then take the middle line, and say that God hath done, or will do his part of fifty degrees, and we also must do our fifty to complete the work? Neither will this answer; for though it has some appearance of making us co-workers with God, it has also the difficulty of making us co-equal with God in this all-important matter. This, therefore, will not answer, and the line must be drawn elsewhere. And if, to give God as much glory as possible, and allow as little as possible to human righteousness, we place ninety and nine degrees wrought, or to be wrought by God, and one degree only left for poor weak man to perform, neither is this without difficulty; for if poor weak man should not perform his little part, all the ninety and nine parts of the work of God go for nothing. And does it not, if man does perform his little part, does it not give him an importance beyond all reason or revelation? Have we erred in drawing the line; then do tell us where it ought to be? But as we think this never can be done; let us acknowledge that our salvation belongs entirely and exclusively to God; and to him therefore belongs the glory; and for this, glory be to God.

Our testimonies for God and his salvation, have been drawn from the New Testament; but, as our Lord says, search the Scriptures; (of the Old Testament;) for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they

which testify of me. (John v. 39.) We will look at some of the important truths relative to the Redeemer taught us by the Prophet Isaiah. We are told of him, that his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. (ix. 6, 7.) There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious. (xi. 10.) He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (xxv. 8, 9.) 'The LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us. (xxxiii. 22.) Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. (xxxv. 4, 5, 6.) Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: he shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. (xlii. 1, 4.) I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. (xliv. 22.) Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation. Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. (xlv. 17.) Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. (xlv. 22.) It is a light thing that thou shouldest be

my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. (xlix. 6.) The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. (li. 6.) The LORD hath comforted his people; he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations: and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. (lii. 9, 10.)

Who hath believed our report? (or doctrine;) and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. (liii. 1, 5, 10, 11.) Thy Maker is thine husband the LORD of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. (liv. 5.) I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. (lvii. 16.)

Well may Isaiah be called the Gospel prophet, when we find in him so much of Christ and his church, the

nature of his Gospel, and the extent of his dominion. We have given these extracts without note or comment. We have in some sense occasionally abridged the text, but never willingly altered the sense; and we earnestly recommend to all to examine the quotations and their context, and we think the result will be, that the honest and intelligent mind will be confirmed in the truth.

One part only of our text remains to be considered, and we will do it with all brevity.

If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. The word here spoken of is the law and the testimony of God; and men do not speak according to it, when they put their own philosophy in the place of either the law or the testimony; they rather dictate to God, than learn of him. Can there be light in such a character? it is, in its own nature, impossible; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. And again; the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain. (1 Cor. iii. 19, 20.) Our true wisdom is to be thankful for both the law and the testimony; for the law is the perfect rule of moral right and wrong; and the testimony, the only, but the sure way of salvation. In proportion as we reject these, are we in darkness; the entire rejection is to have "*no light*;" the partial rejection is to be in clouds of uncertainty, of doubt and fear. It is only the entire acceptance of all God's words, that will lead us into the path of the just, which is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (Prov. iv. 18.)

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

This do in remembrance of me. (1 Cor. xi. 24.)

Who that hears these words, but knows that they refer to the divine institution of the supper of our Lord? and who is so little acquainted with the history of the Church of Christ, as not to know, that it has been observed in all ages, and in all Christian countries, from the days of the apostles to this very hour? It is, therefore, no wonder that its divine origin, its nature, the use and the abuse of it, should always have been subjects in which those who wish prosperity to the kingdom of the Redeemer, should take a lively and heart-felt interest.

The origin we find stated by three of the evangelists, Matthew xxvi., Mark xiv., and Luke xxii.

The time of its origin was the observance of the Jewish passover; and it is not irrelevant for us here to observe the origin of the passover itself.

When God would deliver his people, Israel, from the bondage of Egypt, he afflicted the oppressor with sundry plagues; but these proving ineffectual to the reformation of the tyrant, the death of the first born of every family was determined on. But, previous to this

terrible visitation, the Almighty was pleased to manifest his protection of the oppressed, by requiring that a male lamb, of the first year, and without blemish, one for each house, should be slain, and the blood stricken on the door posts of the house, in which the lamb, being roasted, was eaten. The blood was for a token to preserve the inmates, when the Lord should destroy the first born of every family not thus protected.

The result was according to the prediction: the first born of Egypt, from the first born of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, unto the first born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first born of the cattle, were smitten of the Lord.

The feast of the passover was ordained to be kept as an ordinance for ever; and a reason given is, that when their children should ask them, what mean ye by this service? they should say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. (Ex. xii.)

Here it is proper to observe, that the love of God to Israel was the primary cause of this salvation; that faith in God, existing in the believing Israelite, was the moving cause in him to that obedience which furnished to the destroying angel the sign of protection. The Israelite believed, and was saved. It was while our Lord and his disciples were eating the passover, that he instituted the ordinance of the supper; for the passover was eaten at supper time, and our observance is, therefore, with propriety called, the Lord's supper.

Of the nature of the Lord's supper, we think we may say, that it is a ceremony, pointing out the way

of salvation ; and the fitness of the ceremony depends on the relation or likeness it has to the thing to which it directs us. We think that he who runs may read an analogy between the temporal salvation of the Israelite in Egypt, and the eternal salvation of the Christian, by the Lamb of God, who tasted death for every man; (Heb. ii. 9;) and whose blood of sprinkling cleanseth from all sin, (Heb. xii. 24. 1 John i. 7.) Our Lord had taught both the Jews and his disciples, that he was the bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (John vi. 33.) Now, as we know, that although this word is most commonly used to designate food made of ground corn, yet is it also used for food in general, for any thing that is used for the support of life at large ; is there in the world one so ignorant as not to know, that for the support of the natural body he must eat bread, or die ? but, alas ! how few are there in the world who do know, that the spiritual bread (Christ) is as necessary for the support of the soul, as the natural bread is for the natural body.

The Saviour says again, distinctly, I am that bread of life ; I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. And again ; except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. These things struck the Jews with astonishment ; for as all their hopes were carnal, so, also, was their understanding of his teaching. And if we are asked, why then did he, knowing this to be the state of their minds, deliver himself in such language ? we answer, that though no particular reason

is given in the text, yet in us it is no unreasonable conjecture, that it was, that the subject might more forcibly be impressed upon their memory; and that his disciples, after his ascension, when they should, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, have all things brought to their remembrance, (John xiv. 26,) might see the importance which their divine Master attached to his own death, as the sacrifice and passover for the world.

But when our Lord did tell them distinctly, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life, (John vi. 63,) did they, even then, believe him? did he gain a single proselyte by it? Not one. Nay, not only the Jews did not receive it, but of his disciples there were not a few, but many, who, with the Jews, before this explanation thought, this is a hard saying: who can hear it? (John vi. 60.)

Even they, after the explanation was given, not a few, but many of them, went back, and walked no more with him. (ver. 66.) They wanted no more of his teaching; insomuch that Jesus said unto the twelve, will ye also go away? Of their fidelity to their Master the story is lamentable; one betrayed him with a kiss; another denied him with an oath, repeatedly asserting that he did not know him, and, when pressed on the subject, began to curse and to swear. (Mat. xxvi. 49. 69—74.) Yet this very disciple had but a little while before said, although all shall be offended, yet will not I. (Mark xiv. 29.) And when warned by his Master, that that very day he would deny him thrice, he spake the more vehemently, if I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in anywise. Likewise also said they all. But alas, alas, for poor fallen human nature when left to itself; they all

in the hour of danger forsook him and fled. (Mark xiv. 50.)

In the death of Christ we see the fulfilment of three predictions. He was the Shiloh unto whom should the gathering of the people be. (Gen. xlix. 10.) We think our Lord takes this to himself when, speaking of the manner of his death, he says, And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (John xii. 32.) He was so lifted up, and, as the representative of our nature, drew all men unto him. But, viewed merely in his human nature, as an individual sufferer, he was alone. I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me. (Is. lxiii. 3.)

The elements used in the observance of the supper are peculiarly appropriate; the bread, though one piece, is composed of many grains; and the distinctions which to the eye of man may have existed in the harvest-field, are lost for ever, when God beholds us in Christ Jesus; and doth he not behold us as the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Eph. v. 30.) Jesus says, I am that bread of life. (John vi. 48.) In the first epistle to the Corinthians, we are taught that the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ; that we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) And in the epistle to the Galatians, ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. iii. 28.) In the formation of bread, it is necessary that the grain should be bruised; and we, as represented in Christ, were with him when he was bruised for our iniquities. (Is. liii. 5.) The last process through which bread must pass, to make it fit nutriment for human sustenance, is

that of fire. Was it not the fiery trials and sufferings of our Lord which he alluded to when he said, I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished? (Luke xii. 50.) Was it not the same suffering he referred to when the children of Zebedee were presented to him by their fond mother for earthly honours, and he, declining to promise any, said, ye shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (Mat. xx. 23.) And was not the captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings? (Heb. ii. 10;) a perfect example in his life, and a perfect sacrifice in his death.

The observations made on the bread, will in a great degree apply to the wine; for there also, the distinctions which may have existed in the vineyard, of ripe and unripe, of comparatively sweet and sour, exist no more. And why not? Because they have passed through the wine press. And by whom was this done? by him who trod the wine press alone; (Is. lxiii. 3;) and whose blood is represented in the communion cup.

We have seen the origin and nature of the supper of our Lord. We will now inquire into the use and abuse of it; and, first, of its use. It is evident that the passover was appointed to keep in memory the deliverance of Israel, by the blood of the paschal lamb; and to us it is equally plain that the use of the Christian passover was to preserve in memory the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Our text states the use, when it says, do this in remembrance of me. How is it possible for us to obey this injunction, without calling to our remembrance the circumstances under which he was placed, when he required this of his followers?

That he was about to shed his blood for them, and for many, for the remission of their sins; (Mat. xxvi. 28;) that the bread represented his body given for them; and that they were to do this in remembrance of him. (Luke xxii. 19.) How can we thus call him to our memory, without seeing all, and much more than all we have said of him? And while enjoying this best of all feasts, surely we will find our trust in God strengthened by the consideration, that he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. (Rom. viii. 32.) And by the same reasoning may we not conclude, that if any thing that we esteemed good, whether health, wealth, fame, or fortune, be taken from us, or all of them taken together, it is because God saw that it was not good for us that they should be longer with us? For surely the unchangeable Being who freely gives all would not take, or suffer to be taken from us, that which he had given, if it had been good for us that it should have continued longer with us. This is the true secret of submission to the will of God. Our understanding perfectly acquiesces in this, and does not wish to retain what would to us be no longer good; and though the heart may sink in sorrow, faith will say, Thy will be done.

If no other benefit was found in the continued observance of the supper, this alone would be sufficient for us, that we might have this consolation; but so long as this eating and drinking in memory of Christ is preserved, we think it impossible to destroy the doctrine of his vicarious sacrifice, and by it we show the Lord's death till he come. (1 Cor. xi. 26.) Christ our pass-

over is sacrificed for us. (1 Cor. v. 7.) We will now consider the abuse of this institution. And first, to take the Lord's supper for any secular advantage, or to be seen of men, must surely be an abomination in the sight of God. The first is the deliberate prostitution of a spiritual institution to a worldly advantage, and the last is rank hypocrisy.

Again, if from the indulgence of indolence of mind, or indifference toward the nature and use of the supper, we come to it in culpable ignorance, we are in imminent danger of feelings approaching towards infidelity or fanaticism, the first regarding it as a mere ceremony, and the last expecting from it some miraculous effect.

It is indeed a ceremony, but it is a most significant one, and is by far the most important subject in the world, for it points out to us the way, and the only way, of salvation. If we expect any miraculous effect, we shall be disappointed: none such is either promised or intimated; the ordinance is simple and the effect natural; for what more natural than for us to see the enormity of sin, in the value of the sacrifice made to put it away? (Heb. ix. 26.) And is it not natural, that our love to God should be confirmed and strengthened by every renewal of our obedience to the command, This do in remembrance of me: of him who loved us and gave himself for us? (Gal. ii. 20.) A danger to which we are exposed relative to the supper is, to suppose, that in partaking we bind ourselves by the most solemn oath to the observance of all the moral law of God. Now who hath thus taken this oath, and after the lapse of a week, a day, I had almost said an hour, can look back through the intermediate time and say, I am guiltless? No man can

do this; and what then must his feelings be? I have sworn to the Lord and broken my vow. I have become thus perjured, and have been eating and drinking condemnation to myself. The reason of all this difficulty is, that the poor unhappy participant, instead of discerning the Lord's body, (1 Cor. xi. 29,) took a solemn oath to be obedient to the moral law of Moses and of Christ; and he hath found to his sorrow, that by the deeds of the law no flesh is justified, but that by it he hath the knowledge of sin. (Rom. iii. 20.) Let no one say that we undervalue the law of God. So far from this, it is to us the perfect rule of our discernment of right and wrong; it shows us our utter helplessness, and the absolute necessity of a Saviour.

We have thus endeavoured to show to you the origin, the nature, the use, and the abuse of the supper of our Lord. We have done it with all possible brevity, for the circumstances of the moment permit no extended view of the subject. Enough, however, we hope, has been said to furnish some instruction, and much matter for serious thinking.

But before we part, permit your speaker to make some application of the subject. And first, to you who are members of the Society of United Christian Friends. I pray you, look at the constitution of the society, and you will see that the principal object we had in view, in associating ourselves together, was public worship, and the celebration of the supper. Article 3. section 1. reads thus: This society shall meet every first day of the week for public worship. Section 2. This society shall meet every first Sunday in each month, for the celebration of the Lord's supper. Take away

these, and you dissolve the society. Take away the first, and you despise the injunction, that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. (Heb. x. 25.) Take away the celebration of the supper, and you do all that in you lies to blot out the memory of Christ; for he instituted it, that he might be remembered by his followers. A lukewarmness on these subjects may soon degenerate into coldness, contempt, and even hatred. The exercise you are about to be engaged in, manifests a desire to improve one part of our worship. We pray, that while you are endeavouring to improve the harmony and melody of sound in praising the Lord, you may also praise him with the understanding and the affections, with enlightened heads and loving hearts.

To you who are members of the congregation, but not of the society, we ask you to bear in memory, that we esteem the table at which the supper is observed, as the table of the Lord, and not of man, and that he invites all who know and acknowledge him as Lord and Master to come to it; nay, he commands, for he says to them, do this; and our neglect to do, is disobedience. Let no fear detain you; the desire in the servant to obey is always acceptable to the master; and the maxim that the way of duty is the way of safety, should never be lost sight of. Do this, because he requires it; and do it, that his divine character, as the way of salvation, may be brought to your remembrance; and you will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour, whom to know is life eternal.

To all, we say, examine the nature of the duty, and the purity of your own purpose, and so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (1 Cor. xi. 28.)

MATTHEW xi. 29.

"Learn of me."

It is near fifteen months since your attention was first asked to our divine motto.* The course we have observed in obedience to it, you know; and now we need only say, that when last we had the opportunity of learning of Jesus, our lesson closed with Matthew xxv. 30; and that now we have again the blessing of hearing him in the remaining part of that chapter. Your speaker does not know how he can better discharge this duty than by asking you to hear a sermon prepared for the press more than seven years since. Why it was never printed is of little importance, in comparison of the interest we feel in offering to you what we consider as abundant evidence of what we are to understand by the goats on the left; and this interest is increased by the consideration, that Universalists, as well as others, have erred on this subject.

The introductory remarks are suited only to the circumstances under which the sermon was written.

New-York, June 10th, 1832.

* The words "learn of me" were the motto to a course of lectures on the Gospels, begun March 20, 1831,

MATTHEW xxv. 46.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

At the request of a friend, we take these words for our consideration. It is well known that this text has been taken as the motto to a discourse intended to disprove the doctrine of the final happiness of all men. We have not seen the sermon, nor do we even recollect the name of the preacher. Our purpose on the present occasion is merely to show our own view of the subject.

We abhor quarrels of every kind, and religious quarrels above all others. On the subject of difference in religious opinion, we would recommend to the careful perusal of all, a letter on controversy, written by the celebrated John Newton, of Olney. It breathes a true Christian spirit, and, with but little alteration, is peculiarly worthy the attention of a Universalist.

The right understanding of the doctrine in the text requires that we begin at the 31st verse.

We will now consider the leading features of this interesting portion of the divine testimony.

Verse 31. "*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory,*"

Is not the Son of Man here spoken of, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world?

"*And all the holy angels with him;*"

Here it is worthy of observation, that no unholy angels are mentioned: none but those who have kept their first estate are here noticed.

"*Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.*"

Are we to suppose by this representation, that the once crucified, but now glorified Saviour of the world, is literally to be seated upon a throne, however splendid? Are we not rather to consider these words as emblematical of the omnipotent power of God? We will now ask, what is his glory? We have seen him in the character of Saviour: what, then, is the glory of the Saviour? Is it not the salvation of that world which he came to save? and did he not, by the grace of God, taste death for every man? Is not the blood of Christ too precious to be shed in vain? His glory, therefore, must be the perfect felicity of those whom he came to save.

This is a glory worthy of his character; for we infer his glory from that character, as we do the glory of another from the character which he sustains. Thus, the glory of a philosopher is his increase in knowledge; the glory of a merchant is the extent and punctuality of his dealings; the glory of a soldier is his courage and conduct in the field of battle, crowned by victory: Christ is the glory of the Christian; Jesus is the captain of our salvation; he is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. Does not his glory consist in the triumph of light over darkness; in giving to his redeem-

ed the knowledge of God in Christ, as the Saviour of the world? "For this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Verse 32. "*And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;* (ver. 33;) *and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*"

How are we to understand this verse? Are we to take it in a strictly literal sense, exalting one nation to heaven, and sinking another down into inexpressible and endless wo? It requires every individual of a nation to constitute a nation; for of each one it may with propriety be said, that he is as much a member of the nation as any other. Now, was there ever a nation upon earth, in which every individual was so perfectly pure in faith or practice, as to give him a title to the glories of heaven? And yet no nation can be said fully to be exalted, while any of its parts are wanting. Again; the same observations will apply to a nation condemned to wretchedness. Was there ever in the world a single nation so totally depraved, that no solitary soul could be found in it who might be a subject of the divine complacency? Had there been ten righteous persons found in Sodom, for their sake God would have spared its unrighteous inhabitants.

From these considerations we see the difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of considering this the separation of one nation from another. Were we to consider it a national separation, the *nation* being considered, by contradistinction, as righteous, but having some un-

righteous in it, these unrighteous persons must be exalted to glory; and if even one such could be exalted there, by the same rule every one might. And so of the nation, which, in its general character, is wicked; the righteous portion of it must go down to misery.

To suppose that any of the nations of the earth are to be the subjects of never-ending wretchedness, is utterly inconsistent with various testimonies of God. David tells us, (Ps. xxii. 27, 28,) "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is governor among the nations."

Here we have a clear statement of the present and future state of man. He has forgotten God, and therefore turned from him. But it shall not always be so: he shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and the felicity of his turning is pointed out by his worshipping God. And the reasonableness of this we see from the consideration that the kingdom is the Lord's; that he is the rightful governor among the nations.

Again; the same divine authority tells us, (Ps. lxxxvi. 9,) "That all nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name." Is there any nation that God hath not made? There is none; therefore, all will ultimately be found worshipping God. The nature of this worship we are at no loss to conceive, for our Lord tells us, (John iv. 23,) "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Is not the worship that is in truth the dictate of an enlightened un-

derstanding? and is not the worship that is in spirit the influence of the Spirit of God offered from the heart, glowing with love to him from the knowledge of his love to us? How do we glorify God? is it not by offering to him praise? Such is the divine testimony: (Ps. l. 23.) "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me." How can we praise God, unless we know him; and how can we praise him, when we think we do know him, unless we see him worthy of praise? and what more worthy, than the character of God the Saviour? He loveth the creature whom he hath made. He is wise enough to devise the means of our salvation, and he is mighty to save.

If we can find who are meant by the sheep, and who by the goats, our understanding of the whole subject will be complete. As Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture, it is to the Scripture that we will refer.

The hundreth Psalm is full upon this subject. There all lands are called upon to make a joyful noise unto the Lord, to serve him with gladness, to come before his presence with singing, to know that the Lord he is God, that it is he that has made us. If we had no other information, this would be ground of confidence in him; and if the authority of an apocryphal writer could be considered as corroborating the testimony of Scripture, we would quote Wisdom of Solomon.

Chap. xi. *verse* 24. "For thou lovest all things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made; for never wouldest thou have made any thing if thou hadst hated it." But that, which is more to our present purpose is, that in addition to the character of Creator, it is said, we are his people and the sheep of his

pasture. This is the language addressed to all lands. And for this reason, because he is our Creator, and we are his sheep, we are called on to enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; to be thankful unto him, and to bless his name. For the Lord is good: his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations. The prophet Isaiah bears testimony to the same effect. (Isaiah liii. 6.) "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Here we conceive the human nature, and not the Jews alone are spoken of. *All* in the character of sheep, *all* in the character of stray sheep; and on him, as we have seen, is laid the iniquity of us *all*. It will perhaps be objected, that Christ speaks of his sheep as knowing his voice and following him, and that those who are not thus described must be the goats. But he also says, (John x. 16,) "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice."

We have seen mankind in the character of sheep; we now see a portion of them as the followers of Jesus, and the residue of them wandering from him: but we see his purpose not merely to aid a portion of those wanderers, who would be desirous to find the way, nor to press into the way a few distinguished favourites of heaven, however unworthy in themselves: but by the power of his own omnipotence as Saviour, by the manifestation of his love, he will bring all. And if it were possible to suppose that there was in his bosom the least reluctance to the task, he speaks of himself as bound to do this: he does not say I may, if I will, but

"them also I must bring. And there shall be one fold and one shepherd." Jesus the true Shepherd—human nature the sheepfold. Yet there are now but few who follow the true Shepherd, few indeed who rigidly and consistently adhere to the doctrine of Christ and him crucified, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Perhaps no doctrine in the world is more unpopular, than the all-sufficiency of Christ for our salvation; for although it will not be denied in terms, yet how common is it to find the value of our own works, or of our own faith, considered as necessary to make perfect the work of the Lord. We would not deny, but on the contrary we would maintain, the enjoyment, which true Christian faith gives: neither would we undervalue the morality of good works; they are good and acceptable in the sight of God, so far as they are profitable unto man. But neither our faith, nor our works, can give us a title to eternal life: this is given to us in Christ Jesus.

The folly of valuing ourselves on account of our works, is manifest both by reason and revelation. A distinguished philosopher of our own country has said, "He, that for giving a draught of water to a thirsty person, should expect to be paid with a good plantation, would be modest in his demands, compared with those who think they deserve heaven for the little good they do on earth." And the language of Scripture is yet stronger. (Gal. iii. 10.) "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And again, Paul says, (Romans vii. 7.) "I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said,

Thou shalt not covet. (*Verse* 9.) But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." If Paul speaks thus of himself, what shall we say of ourselves? must we not acknowledge, that, according to the purity of the law of God, there is none good, no not one?

Verse 34. "*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

Who are those who are blessed of our Father, God. We answer, the human nature: for we are taught, (Gen. i. 27, 28,) that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them: and God blessed them." And this blessing he has never taken away. It will perhaps be asked, did not God take away this blessing, and pronounce a curse on man for his transgression? We answer, No. The word of God is, (Gen. iii. 17,) "Cursed is the *ground* for thy sake." (*Verse* 19.) "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." In this curse, pronounced upon the earth, God did in reality pronounce a negative blessing on man, by obliging him to labour for his existence. What would be the moral situation of *fallen* man, if the earth yielded spontaneously all that is necessary for his support? Might not that be realized which has sometimes been attempted in vain, that the nations would rise en masse against each other? And is it not now almost common to a proverb, that the industrious man is comparatively virtuous, and the idle vicious? We hope that we shall not be considered as speaking too strong a language, when we call God the Father of mankind. The great

apostle to the Gentiles (Acts xvii,) taught this doctrine to a mixed multitude of idolaters, among whom were philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics, the two most distinguished sects of philosophy: quoting one of their own poets, that "We are also his offspring." And our Lord taught his followers to address the Creator by this endearing name, though at that time they had no higher conception of his kingdom than that of a temporal sovereignty. And we also teach our children to put up their little hands together, to look up to God, and to say, "Our Father." Even at this age, when they are incompetent to what in more mature years would be considered the study of theology, we teach them this first great principle. Shall we at an after time, by teaching them that God is not their Father, endeavour to bring them to the reasonable conclusion, that one or other of these lessons is untrue? The first is true, for it is given as such by the inspired apostle even to idolaters; the latter then falls of course; and for this good reason, that the relative character of father and child is indelible. The sacred tie which makes the male and female one is dissolved by death: but the relation of parent and offspring can never alter. The child may indeed be ignorant of the parent, and every child in early infancy is so, but does this absolve the parent from the duty of that tender care, which is due from the parent to the child? Can even the disobedience of a child justify the parent in the neglect of any thing, which would be for the real advantage of that child? Is this the language of nature and of reason with respect to poor sinful man, and shall we suppose, that God, the Father of spirits, will not discharge those duties fully?

How often would the earthly parent draw the wanderer to himself, but cannot: but what man cannot, God both can and will do. It may be said, it is the duty of a parent to correct; we admit it, nay, we maintain it, both with respect to the earthly and the heavenly Father. The earthly parent has no right to destroy his child, neither can we suppose that he has any right to correct, but for the welfare of his offspring. The chastisements of God (Heb. xii. 10) are "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness," and therefore for our happiness.

Verse 35. "*For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in.*

36. "*Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

37. "*Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink?*

38. "*When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee?*

39. "*Or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee?*

40. "*And the King shall answer and say unto them: Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*"

The duties required in these verses are spoken of as done unto the brethren of the Lord. If we are to judge who are his brethren, by the evidence of his love in dying for them, we are taught, (Heb. ii. 9,) that "He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

That " He," (ver. 11,) " is not ashamed to call them *brethren.*" That, (ver. 14—17,) as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his *brethren*, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Here we observe that *every* man is called his *brother:* that he was a partaker of our flesh and blood, that he might deliver from the bondage of fear, those who were *all their lifetime* subject to it, and who consequently lived and *died* in fear: and in his character of High Priest he is recognised as the *brother* of those, for whom he offered the sacrifice of himself. This calls our attention to the high priest under the Jewish economy; whose duty it was annually (Levit. xvi. 33, 34) to make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation, and for all their sins. The commandment Christ has laid on us is, (Matthew v. 44,) " Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." And the same Spirit, speaking through the apostle to the Romans, says, (Rom. xii. 20, 21,) " If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This

is the way God hath dealt with us, for (Rom. v. 8) "he commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, and, (verse 10,) when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

Should we be now asked, Does not Christ here attribute the felicity of the blessed to their good deeds? We answer, No. And first on the general principle, that endless life is the gift of the Creator, not the purchase of the creature: and again, though the whole human nature is before him, yet as respects benevolent actions, he must be necessarily speaking *of* some and *to* others. And when we consider, that these acts of benevolence are required of us to be done to the vilest of the vile, even to those who despitefully use us, and curse us, we see the good will of the Redeemer to them, as the creatures of God; and we see the great necessity of their redemption from their state of sin, which is always a state of misery. Jesus is the Saviour of the chief of sinners. Those who esteem themselves the righteous may call sinners to repentance as long as they live, but if they *do* no good to their bodies, they give but an imperfect evidence of love to the soul. In the answer of the righteous (and they are righteous, so far as they *do* right) we find a striking evidence how little they depend on themselves for salvation. To us, who do not depend on our own works, how strong the stimulus to acts of mercy: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Which of us can realize the thought of our Redeemer being among us, in the character of a stranger? We instantly inquire, Where is he? As-

tonished at hearing he is in prison, we fly to him; there he lies on the cold ground, and without a cover: he is pale and emaciated: he is sick, for hunger and thirst have made him so. Would not each of us think himself blessed as an angel of heaven, in being permitted to minister to his relief? Yet this we have in our power, for he hath taught us, it is more blessed to give than to receive: it is made our duty to act thus even to our enemies. Jesus hath set us the divine example, and he esteems acts of kindness done to the meanest as done to himself.

Having now seen that the human nature is the sheep of Jesus the great Shepherd, we might be excused if we were at a loss clearly to distinguish what is meant by the goats: for even the wise and the learned find a comparative difficulty on some passages of Scripture. In such a case we might observe, it is enough for us to know, that our nature, though fallen and defiled by sin, is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

We thank God, that to us there is no difficulty.

Verse 41. "*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*"

In the verse now before us we find, that it is "the devil and his angels" who are cursed; and that it was for them the everlasting fire was *prepared*. In the 34th verse we find that the kingdom was *prepared* for the blessed of the Father. We believe all will agree, that it is the *blessed* of the Father who are received into the kingdom prepared for them; and we see no reason why we should not consider, that it is the *cursed*, the devil and his angels, who are to endure the everlasting fire

prepared for them. Fallible man may, and often does, prepare for one purpose, and appropriate to another: this is an evidence of his want of wisdom. If we see a farmer build a large dwelling house, and a small barn, we are not surprised to see him appropriate each to the use for which the other was intended. But how absurd the idea, to apply any thing like this to God: He knows the end from the beginning, and can never be disappointed in the means he uses to effect the end: He made man, to enjoy him, and to glorify him for ever. Christ is the means, and can he fail effecting the purpose?

The devil and his angels, or the fallen angelic nature, not human nature, is here spoken of under the character of goats; and this view receives confirmation by the consideration, that when our first parents fell, through the influence of the deceiver, the curse was pronounced on *him.* (Gen. iii. 14.) "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, *thou art cursed* above all cattle."

That we are justified in considering the goat as hieroglyphical of the devil, is supported by several authorities; and it is worthy of observation, that among the authors now to be quoted, not one of them professes to believe in the final happiness of all men; and the commentators are decidedly against it; we may, therefore, on this subject put an undoubting confidence in their sincerity.

The first we offer is from the English annotations, a work in which, with others, a number of the divines who formed the celebrated Confession of Faith, at Westminster, were engaged. This Confession is the standard of the church of Scotland.

"*Leviticus* xtii. 7. Unto devils. Meaning whatsoever is not the true God, (Deut. xxxii. 17. Ps. cvi. 37. 1 Cor. x. 20. 2 Cor. xi. 15. Rev. ix. 20,) but yet taken for a God, and worshipped as a God. The Hebrew word *sehhirim*, or *segnirim*, signifieth hair, and goatish, of *sahhar*, or *sagnar*, a hair, or hairy creature, or goat: by which may be meant those devils who appeared rough and hairy, as the satyrs or fauns; (Essay xxxiv. 14;) or because the apparition of such, through fear, made the hair stand on end, as Job iv. 15."

The above note is by John Ley, A. M., a member of the assembly of divines at Westminster. His biographer (Reid) says of him, that he was an eminently learned and pious divine, deeply read in the fathers and councils, and one of the chief pillars of presbyterianism.

We again quote the English annotations on

"*Isaiah* xiii. 21. And satyrs. The word here used doth most commonly signify *a goat*, (Gen. xxxvii. 31. Lev. iv. 23,) so called because he is very *shaggy*, or *hairy*; for that seems to be the primary notation of the word. (Gen. xxvii. 11.) Hence it is, that it is here rendered *satyrs*.—The word is sometimes used for *devils*, such as the idolatrous people in old time adored. So it is taken Lev. xvii. 7. 2 Chron. xi. 16. And they seem so termed, either because they appeared in the shape of *goats* unto those that adored them, or had dealings with them."

This quotation is from Thomas Gataker, another member of the Westminster assembly, a man of extensive erudition. Calamy says of him, that no commen-

tator, ancient or modern, is entitled to higher praise. On the subject of church government he was an Episcopalian; but in obedience to the sense of a majority of his brethren, he signed the covenant.

Our next authority is from the celebrated Thomas Scott, a divine of the church of England, and in doctrine a Calvinist. He says on *Leviticus* xvii. 7: The word translated *devils*, is taken from the *roughness of a goat*, and, indeed, signifies *a goat*.

We now ask your attention to the selection of notes on the Bible by D'Oyly and Mant, domestic chaplains to the archbishop of Canterbury; of course, Episcopalians, but Arminians in doctrine.

"*Leviticus* xvii. 7. Unto devils. Literally, in the original, "unto the hairy ones," meaning those brute animals covered with hair, especially goats, which they worshipped in Egypt, either alive, or in figure. The people of Mendes, in Egypt, worshipped Pan, under the form of a live goat; and it is related that monstrous obscenities were practised at this worship. These *devils*, or *goats*, are joined with Jeroboam's calves at 2 Chron. xi. 15.

"2 *Chron.* xi. 15. *And for the devils.* The Hebrew word here signifies "goats" literally, and was a term commonly used for demons or false gods of all denominations, who, according to the notions prevailing in those times, were supposed to appear under this shape.—*Pyle.*

"*Isaiah* xiii. 20. It is uncertain what creatures are meant by some Hebrew words in the following verses; particularly what the word signifies which our English renders *satyrs*. It originally means goats; in which

shape evil spirits were supposed to appear; on which account our interpreters sometimes render it *devils*. (See note at Lev. xvii. 7. 2 Chron. xi. 15; but here, and ch. xxxiv. 14. it is rendered *satyrs*.) Desolate and forlorn places were supposed to be inhabited by evil spirits. Compare Baruch iv. 35. Rev. xviii. 2. W. Lowth."

Calmet, in his Dictionary of the Bible, under the article goat, says:

"GOATS. In Leviticus xvii. 7. God commands to bring all animals designed to be sacrificed to the door of the tabernacle; 'And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, (literally to *goats*,) after whom they have gone a whoring.' 2 Chronicles xi. 15. says, Jeroboam established priests for the high places, and for the goats, and the calves, which he had made.

"The generality of interpreters understand this as meaning devils, spectres, satyrs, idolatrous figures of goats.

"Herodotus says,* (lib i. cap. 46,) that 'at Mendes, in lower Egypt, both the male and female goat were worshipped; that the God Pan had the face and thighs of a goat. Not that they believed him to be of this figure, but because it had been customary to represent him thus. They paid divine honours also to real goats, as appears in the table of Isis. The abominations committed during the feasts of these infamous deities are well known.'"

And under the article Azazel, Calmet tells us further, that

* This is an error of the press; it should be lib. 2.

"*Azazel.* Spenser says, it signifies some demon, and that the goat sent to Azazel was given to the devil. Mark, the head of the Marcosian heretics, called the devil, whose name he used in his juggling tricks, Azazel. (Epiphan. Hœres. 34.) Spenser cites the Cabalists and Julian the apostate, apud S. Cyril, lib. 9. contra Julian, as favouring his opinion."

As Calmet has referred to Herodotus, it is proper to refer to him. In book 2. ch. 46, he says, "The Mendesians refuse to sacrifice goats of either sex, out of reverence to Pan; that, like the Greeks, they always represent Pan, in his images, with the countenance of the she goat, and the legs of the male. The real motive which they assign, Herodotus says, he does not choose to relate. The veneration of the Mendesians for these animals, and for the males in particular, is equally great and universal; this is also extended to goatherds. There is one he-goat more particularly honoured than the rest, whose death is seriously lamented by the whole district of the Mendesians. In the Egyptian language the word Mendes is used in common for Pan and for a goat." The motive of the Mendesians, which Herodotus does not choose to relate, must have been scandalously obscene beyond all our conceptions; for he does not hesitate to state a fact, of which he says, "it happened in this country (Mendes) within my remembrance, and was, indeed, universally notorious;" but the fact, of which he speaks without reserve, is too abominable to be repeated here.

Herodotus, book 2. ch. 145. The Greeks considered Hercules, Bacchus, and Pan, as the youngest of their deities; but Egypt esteemed Pan as the most an-

cient of the gods. (Book 6. ch. 105.) The Athenians erected a temple to Pan."

We now turn to Diodorus, the Sicilian, a Greek historian, who flourished about 44 years before Christ. He says, (book 1. ch. 6. p. 44,) that the goat was worshipped in Mendes; and further, (p. 45,) that the Thebans say, that the goat was accounted among the number of the gods. But the reason he gives why the goat was thus esteemed, is too scandalously obscene to be mentioned here.

Lempriere, in his Classical Dictionary, says, "The worhip of Pan was well established, particularly in Arcadia, where he gave oracles on mount *Lycæus*. His festivals, called by the Greeks *Lycæa*, were brought to Italy by Evander, and they were well known at Rome by the name of Lupercalia. The worship and the different functions of Pan are derived from the heathen mythology of the ancient Egyptians. This god was one of the eight great gods of the Egyptians, who ranked above the other twelve gods, whom the Romans called *consentes*. He was worshipped with the greatest solemnity all over Egypt. His statues represented him as a goat, not because he was really such, but for mysterious reasons. He was looked upon as the principle of all things."

Plato, who flourished about four hundred and fifty years before Christ, worshipped Pan as the *great all*. (Ramsay, vol. 2. p. 440.)

From what we have seen, we think, that to the unprejudiced it will appear evident, that the idolatrous worship of the goat, or Pan, prevailed very extensively in the heathen world, and that our translators of the Bible considered this worship as offered to the devil. If

the worship of Pan had been confined to the ignorant and immoral, we would not be greatly surprised; but when we find Plato, whose writings were so celebrated, and whose opinions were so respected, that he was called divine; and "whose philosopy was so sublime, that some writers have imagined he drew many of his opinions concerning the Supreme Being from the writings of Moses, while he resided among the Egyptian priests:" when we find so great a man as he was, addressing the Creator thus, "O great Pan, or, great all," we are both surprised and astonished at the universal prevalence of this abominable idolatry; and it is surely not to be wondered at, that the goat should be the hieroglyphic of the devil.

Verses 42—44. "*For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?*"

It is worthy of remark, that in the verses we have last read, and which contain the charges against the fallen angelic nature, there is nothing said of any positive evil done: the offence is the neglect of doing positive good. This should teach us a lesson of humility; for we are too much disposed to value ourselves on what we esteem our innocence, whereas we are as much bound to do good, as to avoid evil. By what we have said, we would by no means be understood to believe, that no evil has been done: the devil is a liar, and the

father of lies; and we know nothing more productive of evil than falsehood. It ought not to appear strange to us, that devils are accountable beings. It is as reasonable that the angelic nature, though fallen, should be accountable, as that man, though fallen, should be accountable. Every intelligent created being is accountable to the Creator for the use of the power given. The influence of evil spirits on the children of men is generally acknowledged; and we need not now attempt to prove it. If we do not mistake, it has been, and, we think, is still acknowledged in the form of indictment, where it is said, that the party accused, "not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and instigated by the devil," did, at such time and place, do so, and so, and so.

The answer of the unhappy spirits to the charge brought against them, appears as if they were unconscious of offence; and the reply of our Lord confirms the doctrine of the duty of active obedience, in these words:

Verse 45. "*Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*"

The friends of the doctrine of endless misery rely on the word *aionion*, which, in the former part of this verse is translated everlasting, and in the close, eternal; and because it is the same word, that is used both with respect to the punished and the righteous, draw the conclusion, that if suffering is not endless, the felicity of the blessed may also terminate. This is plausible, but not sound. We are not surprised when superficial readers of the Bible are led away by this reasoning; but when the scholar, with much apparent candour and

piety, comes to this conclusion, we can only account for it, by supposing him to be under the influence of a long-established belief in the doctrine of endless misery. He knows, what every attentive reader of the English Bible does know, that the words everlasting and eternal are often applied to things which must end, and some which have already ended; that the import of the word *aionion* must ever be taken from the nature of the subject with which it is connected; and he will ask, what is there in punishment to create a necessity for its endless duration? What glory does it give to God? what benefit does it confer on man? His assurance of endless felicity to himself will not be disturbed, because the words everlasting and eternal do not *necessarily* imply an endless duration. From the nature of the subject (*felicity*) he would infer, that it will be endless. The character of God, who is the Father of mercies, and the God of the whole earth, would support this inference. He would rejoice, that even uninspired men, who did not acknowledge these truths, have expressed the substance of the truth in the answer given to the first question in the Assembly's Catechism, where it is said, "The chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever." With what pleasure will he now turn to the sacred page, and read, (John iii. 17,) "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved;" and (John xvii. 4) Jesus says, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" and on the cross he says, (John xix. 30,) "It is finished."

If a doubt could yet remain, that doubt is done away

by the gracious words of the Saviour, who says, (John xiv. 19,) "because I live, ye shall live also." He here perceives, that the life of his soul is the consequence of the life of Jesus, the life of Jesus being the cause; and, as long as Jesus lives, he shall live also. Does he ask, how long shall that be? Scripture gives the answer: (John v. 26:) "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."

Let us for a moment longer dwell on this interesting subject. The self-existent God is from his own nature of endless duration: he is called Father; for he is the author of being: he hath given to the Son (the manifestation of himself) to have life in himself, as he, the Father, hath; the life of the Son is therefore endless; the Son makes his life the cause of ours: we therefore shall live as long as Jesus, and he as long as the Father. The result is, therefore, at once simple and glorious: our life shall continue in the endless duration of the self-existent God.

One part of our subject only remains for consideration: the righteousness of those who are received into endless life, or, in the language of the text, into life eternal.

The character of man as a fallen being is unrighteous; this was the character of the antediluvian world; (Gen. vi. 5;) "God saw that the wickedness of man was great:" the postdiluvian world gives no better evidence of character. Paul says, (Rom. iii. 9,) "we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And, again, (Gal. iii. 10,) "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Here we observe that the law requires an unbroken continuity of obedience: the smallest offence constitutes a man a sinner: and when we look at the commandment, which says, "Thou shalt not covet," we see that it takes cognizance of the thoughts of the heart. Who can stand before this law? Who can look into his own heart, and then, looking up to the Searcher of hearts, who is judge of all the earth, say, I am guiltless? If there is any, who, after all this, will say, I am righteous, let him know that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: but let him also know, that, in thus rejecting the necessity of a Saviour, by his own rule he must stand or fall. Deluded soul, well is it for him that Christ died even for him; for he tasted death for every man, and is the propitiation, not only for those who know they need a Saviour, but for the sins of the whole world. (1 John ii. 2.)

What then is the righteousness to which the self-convicted sinner can trust? We answer, the righteousness of Christ, who says, (John iv. 34,) "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." His righteousness is perfect, and it is our rejoicing, that (1 Cor. i. 30) Christ is made unto us righteousness.

We freely acknowledge that till a man has this faith, he can have no rational and Scriptural rest. (Heb. iv. 3.) "We, which have believed, do enter into rest."

We lament the blindness of an unbelieving world, but we are comforted in the assurance that (Ps. xxii. 27, 28) "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations

shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the Governor among the nations." And again, (Ps. lxxxvi. 9,) "All the nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name."

Perhaps some may now say: "we thought he believed in the restoration of all intelligent creatures, yet we have heard no allusion to the final felicity of the fallen angelic nature."

To such we would observe, that Christ sent his apostles to the world of mankind, and commanded, that to them the Gospel should be preached: but if we are urged to express an opinion upon the subject, we have no hesitation to say, that there is nothing in the character of God to justify the belief of the endless misery even of devils. What is a devil? A fallen angel. What is a sinner? A fallen man. Why should not the union of infinite love, wisdom, and power, which acting in God have found out the way by which he hath manifested himself as the just God, and yet the justifier of ungodly men, also find out a way by which he will restore the fallen angelic nature? We may be asked, when and how? To this we may say, we cannot tell, for we are not instructed; but we will also say of the fallen angels, that they must be endlessly miserable, be annihilated, or restored: the first is abhorrent to the character of God: the second would derogate from his wisdom, represent him as unable to new make the vessel that was marred in the hand of its maker, and that therefore in the violence of his anger and disappointment he destroyed it: the last is then the only rea-

sonable conclusion, they shall be new-made or restored. And we are sure, that this text gives no reasonable assurance of the endless misery even of devils; for the word *eternal* does not *necessarily* imply an endless duration.

THE END.

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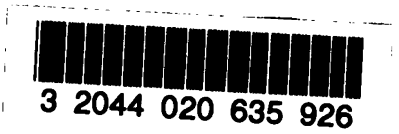
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